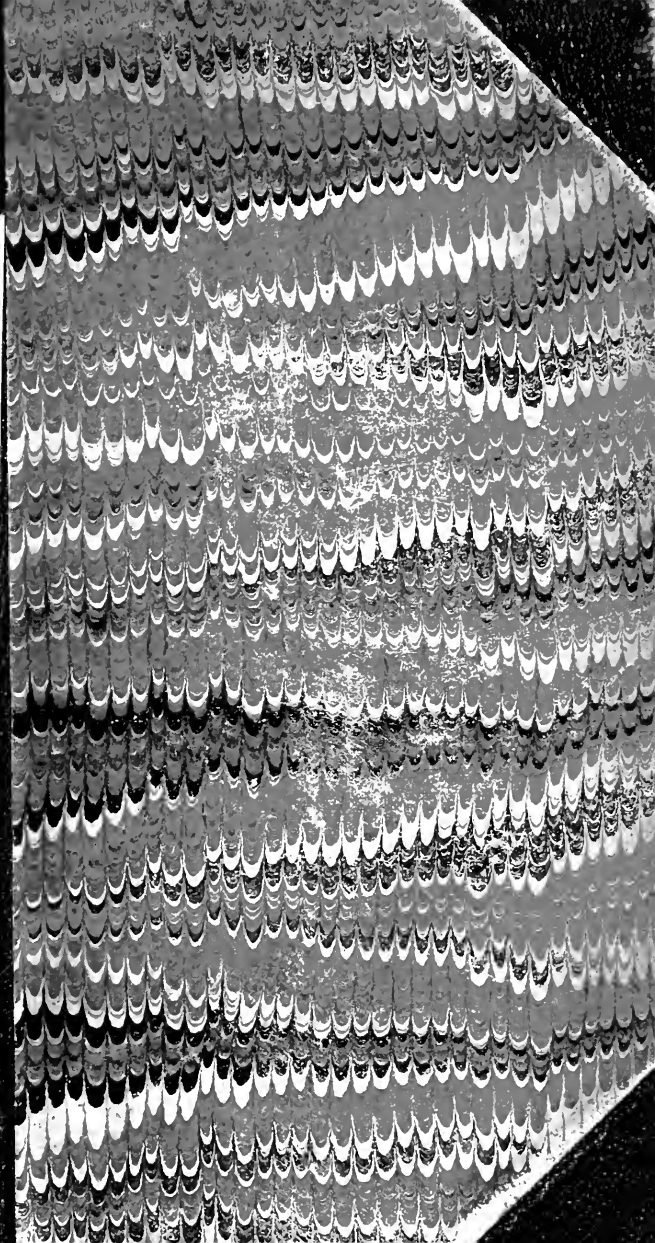
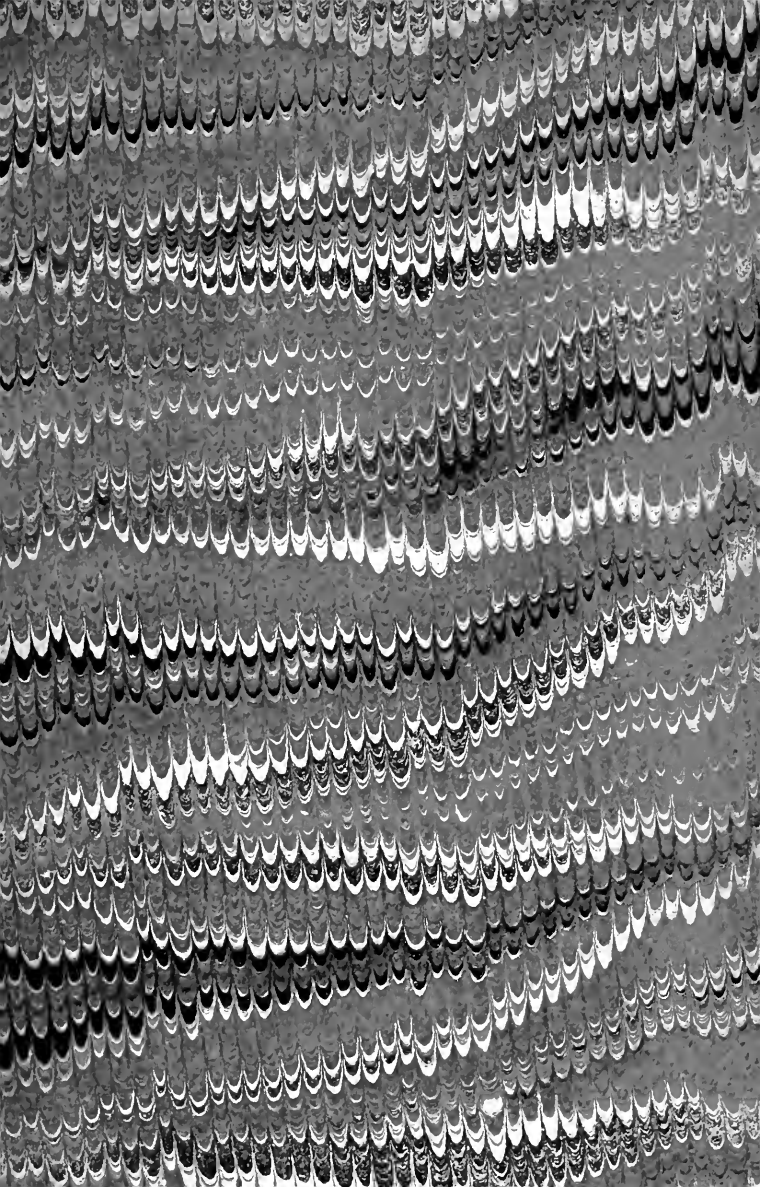


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FRIENDS IN COUNCIL.

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FRIENDS IN COUNCIL.

A SERIES OF READINGS
AND DISCOURSE
THEREON.

Second Series.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

A NEW EDITION.

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1877



ADDRESS TO THE READER.



I THINK it is desirable for the reader of this work to know that the Essay on War was written some time ago, when the peace of Europe had not been disturbed. That Essay was directed chiefly against the growing practice of maintaining large standing armies in times of peace, which was then a constant cause of apprehensiveness to those who thought at all upon the subject. Their fears have been but too well justified by the result. It must not, however, be imagined that the "friends" who took part in that discussion upon war, would be blind to the dangers of their country, when war had once begun between two great European powers; or that they would counsel remissness in a judicious preparation for the

contingency of war. I venture to use the word "judicious," because, if much judgment is not used, a large part of the expenditure will infallibly be wasted. That, however, is a question for men versed in the science of war. What I have to bring before the reader is the point of view from which the "Friends in Council" had to consider the question of war, and to recall to his mind a time, not so far back, when our alliances were supposed to be firm, faithful, and confiding, and when it was not imagined that any disturbance was likely to arise in Europe, which diplomacy could not easily compose.

On the termination of the present war the maintenance of large standing armies in times of peace will again become the great question for the world. These standing armies add somewhat to the cares and burdens of every grown-up person throughout Europe. Quite putting aside all moral considerations (indeed Christianity has long been out of the question, and *Te Deums* are sung where *Misereres* would be far more appropriate), mere household prudence should make it one of the first cares of all good citizens to diminish these monstrous armies. If mankind were

really much advanced in civilization, there would be a federation amongst the sensible and influential people of all nations to prevent monarchs from being entrusted with these large means for molesting the human race.

Individually, we are much in advance of the inhabitants of those barbarous nations, where slaughter is the only claim to renown. The savage Indian had no other way to power or to any success in life, but in procuring the death of his enemies. Hung round with scalps, he sought the rewarding smile and sure caress of his beloved, and by the same joyous trophies he gained the acclamation of the people over whom he desired to have sway. We have advanced a little beyond that ; but it remains for the European people to prevent their monarchs from seeking distinction in this barbarous method, and becoming great according to the numbers they might proudly show of enemies' scalps taken in battle.

There is no longer any occasion for us Europeans to prove our prowess. If we take the five great Powers of Europe—Austrians, British, French, Prussians, and Russians—each of these nations has shown in a

hundred fights that they are as brave as men need be. They might really repose upon their laurels ; and, as the greatest part of them live comparatively in a squalid state, they might turn their attention to those improvements in the arts of life which are so much wanted in every European nation.

Among the people especially to be pitied, if a general war should arise, the British labourer and the Russian peasant might claim a high place. Making but small account of glory ; not prone in the first instance to war, though splendidly tenacious* in battle when it does come ; with the greatest hopes before them of large improvement in their condition—for the British labourer, increasing attention given to his welfare at home, and new opportunities of emigration ; for the Russian, a prospect of freedom, and then the peaceful conquest of his own wide lands ;—they are of all men those who should be most reluctantly condemned to warfare.

* Frederick the Great, after thoroughly beating the Russian army on some occasion, could not get it off the field, because it would remain there ; and it was impossible in the time to slay so many human beings.

Our statesmen are, I believe, thoroughly anxious to save their countrymen from this calamity. It is vain, I fear, to hope that the words of any private man will ever reach the Autocrat of All the Russias. But if he could know how many persons in this country—persons whose good opinion no man would be above desiring—have watched his career since he came to the throne and sympathized with him in his untiring efforts to abolish serfdom, he might perhaps feel a sorrow like their sorrow, if forced to divert his mind from such beneficent enterprises to the commonplace despotic amusement of war.

Lord Stanley, speaking of the present war, said justly, "It will be a war wantonly, needlessly, and, I will say, wickedly made. It will be a war dictated by the ambition of a few men placed in too high a position above the masses of mankind to feel that respect for human rights or that sympathy for human suffering, a due regard for which forms the bonds by which the human race is banded together."* No success in arms should make us forget the truth

* *Address to the Electors of King's Lynn.*

contained in these words. There is still some force in public opinion as it exists throughout Europe ; and, when the fitting time comes, a steady protest may yet be made against the inhumanity of those who force on difficult questions to the sole arbitrament of war, and especially against those who perpetuate the system of warfare by the maintenance of excessive standing armies.

I make no apology for the length of this address to the reader. These thoughts about war are, I believe, in most men's minds ; and, if not, they ought to be. When Europe is exposed to the risk of relapsing into large and continued warfare, and when our thoughts are greatly given to the problem of how the most men can be killed in the shortest possible time (a problem, by the way, which the British with their singular mechanical skill will be the first to solve when they give their attention to it), no person, however obscure, should omit the opportunity of doing what he can to restrain the waste of blood, of treasure, and of thought, which is imminent for the present generation.

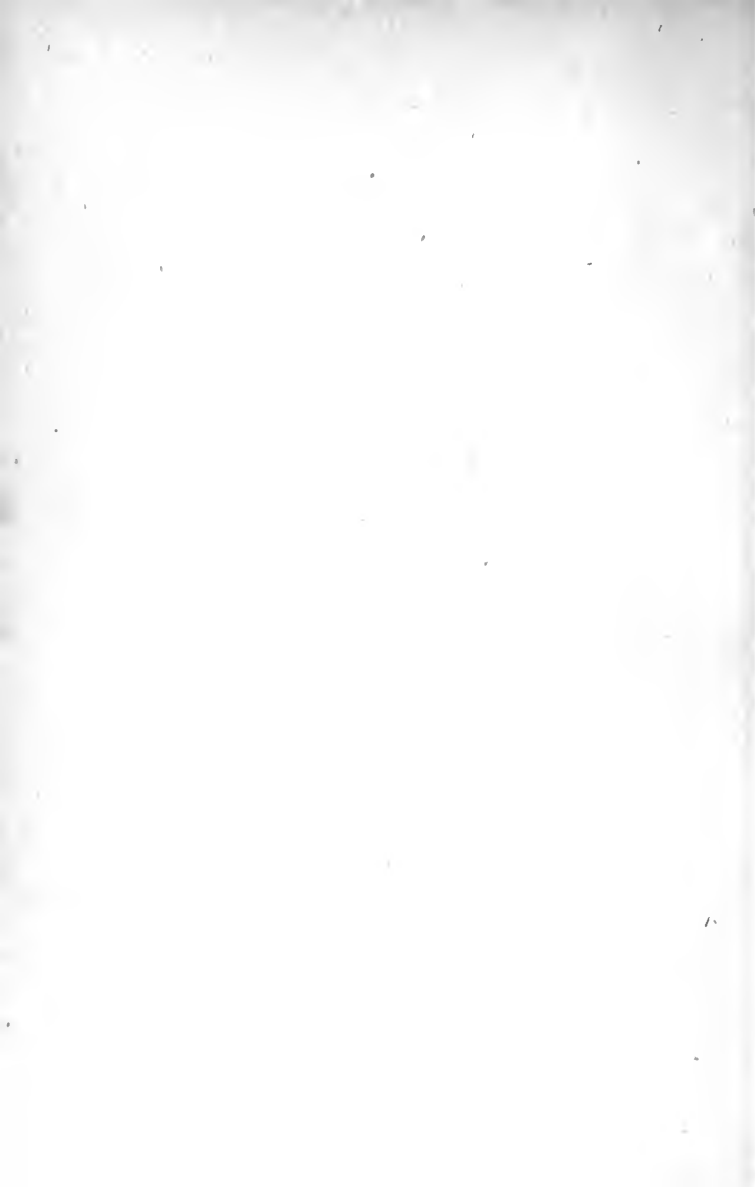
It was with this view that the essay in question

was originally written ; but then an immediate war was scarcely in any man's contemplation, and the question was, as the question will be again, of the hazard and injury to mankind arising from the maintenance of excessive armies in times of peace.

London, July 7th, 1859.

P.S.—At this Harlequin period of the world, what is written on public affairs in any one week may be, or at least may seem, obsolete and inapplicable in the course of the next. The peace, distantly looked forward to in the foregoing Address, has come. The chief difficulty, however, contemplated in that Address still remains for solution.

July 15th, 1859.



INTRODUCTION.

AN exquisite thing is good conversation. It winds round and round the subject. It has such charming pauses and interruptions: it is not merely like real life; it is real life. I think, too, it is not only very beautiful but very useful. I believe that if a man were to look back upon some of the most important resolves that he has taken in the course of his life, he would find that they have been greatly influenced by what he has heard in a chance way in good conversation. I often pity the lower animals for their want of talk. To be sure there is the lowing of kine; there are the songs of birds, which Milverton, who hates their noise, always calls twittering; there is the grand roar of wild beasts in deep forests; and there are the queer whistlings, shriekings, hootings and other unaccountable noises of the lower animals, which for my part I like to hear,

because I am sure they convey some meaning, and are well understood by kindred creatures. I dare say that love, hatred, joyousness, and terror, are well enough expressed by these sounds. But where are the quips, the cranks, the bright jests, the pompous periods, the sly rejoinders, the hard conclusions of inexorable logic, which belong to good human talk? If there is an Ellesmere in the lower creation—some strange outlandish bird it may be—how does it manage to express its sensations? Imagine a humorous animal (and sometimes I fancy, from the look of their eyes and the curling of their noses, that there are such creatures): how puzzled it must be to find a vehicle for its humour.

“Sir, we had good talk.” What a keen sense of enjoyment is expressed in those few words of Dr. Johnson’s. And a modern American philosopher has said, not without some reason, that all the means and appliances of civilisation culminate in bringing together, round a table, in a warm, comfortable room, three or four intelligent people to talk pleasantly.

All other forms of composition are, comparatively speaking, elaborate works of art. When I read or listen to speeches, sermons, essays, novels, epics, sonnets,—especially sonnets—I seem to be walking in the trim gardens of our ancestors; but when I

listen to good talk, it is like surveying the natural landscape, which does not, at first sight, convey a distinct meaning and purpose ; but gradually a result appears in some influence or other upon one's mind ; and that result comes sweetly, softly, and undeniably.

In thus extolling conversation I magnify my office as a reporter of conversations, but if one did not magnify one's office, one would be a miserable person ; and surely any reporter at the Bar, or in the Senate, must feel almost as if he made (sometimes he does make a good part of them) the brilliant speeches he reports.

We " Friends in Council " are of course somewhat older men than when we first began to meet in friendly conclave ; and I have observed as men go on in life they are less and less inclined to be didactic. They have found out that nothing is, didactically speaking, true. They long for exceptions, modifications, allowances. A boy is clear sharp, decisive in his talk. He would have this. He would do that. He hates this ; he loves that : and his loves or his hatreds admit of no exception, He is sure that the one thing is quite right, and the other quite wrong. He is not troubled with doubts. He knows.

I see now why, as men go on in life, they delight in anecdotes. These tell so much, and argue, or pronounce directly, so little.

The friendship of Milverton and Ellesmere is not altered. Indeed the friendship of such men seldom does alter. To me, too, they are just the same, showing as much respect, and sometimes (as in Ellesmere's case) as little, as they used to do in the conversations I have formerly reported. Mildred and Blanche, two cousins of Milverton's, have now grown up into young women, and occasionally take some part in our conversations, as much as women generally do in conversation. We shall also have another interlocutor, Mr. Midhurst, an older man than Milverton or Ellesmere, of whom I would rather say nothing; at least as regards his character, for I do not understand it.

In person Mr. Midhurst resembles a portrait there is of the great Lord Clarendon by Sir Peter Lely. He has the same burly, dignified figure, and the same acute, thoughtful countenance. The moment I saw Mr. Midhurst, I was reminded of this picture; and the likeness would be complete, but that Mr. Midhurst has a far more melancholy look than Charles's Chancellor, and has that form of lip which is said

to indicate an exceeding appreciation of the good things of this life.

The time and place of our conversations have varied, as the reader will see, very much. I cannot pretend to give those times and places very accurately, or to assert that they will come in any regular order. Occasionally, the choicest companions are somewhat dull, especially when they are happy and at ease in each other's society; and I only undertake to report those conversations which seem to me interesting. I am not the Boswell to these younger men, my pupils (for as such I still regard them), and I cannot undertake to record every trivial word that they have uttered, or trivial thing that they have done. I cannot speculate about my Dr. Johnsons, as Boswell did about his, when he noticed, and gravely put down as a thing that had perplexed him, the fact that his great man was in the habit of putting aside bits of orange-peel.

I will not linger more in giving preparatory explanations, but simply describe how it was that we came to go abroad, and that most of the conversations about to be recorded took place at different towns on the Continent.

We were sauntering about Milverton's garden, and were all of us in a very tired and stupid state of

mind. I had not been away from my parish duties for two years. Ellesmere had gone through a laborious session, and Milverton was over-worked and over-fatigued, though ready, as usual, to discuss any question that might come before him. Still, there was an absence of life and animation even in him, and he was discoursing at the moment about the number of failures that there are in life, amongst public men, for instance; and how the most signal downfalls and disasters often come on at a time of life when they are utterly irreparable; "and," he added:—"I should like to write a book all full of consolation, so that when men were more vexed and unhappy than usual, they should turn to the thoughts of Leonard Milverton to see whether any small comfort could be got out of them. I say small comfort, because the great sources of comfort would have to be looked for in books of higher purpose, but mine should only aim at minor consolations." I interrupted him as follows:—

Dunsford. One of the most remarkable attempts at consolation that I know is in a letter from Queen Elizabeth to some Earl and Countess who had just lost a son. I do not remember the words, and I cannot think where I saw the letter (I believe you pointed it out to me, Milverton), but the course of the argument was this:—

In time you will be comforted. Why should not present reasoning about a calamity do as much for you as the lapse of time?

Ellesmere. Very amiable of Elizabeth and well-intended, no doubt, but charmingly pedantic : just like her father, one of the most striking characteristics of whose character was, I believe, pedantry. By lapse of time, of course she meant distraction of attention by other circumstances happening in time ; and, as I have been telling Milverton, change is the arch-consoler, and that is why, as we are all rather tired, I vote we go abroad.

Milverton. I do not see why change of place is necessary. Would not change of pursuit do ? In general we go about here in our walks without sufficiently changing our ideas. If we were to look at Nature more closely, it would be change enough. I have a theory that every plant we see is of some great and peculiar utility, and we have not yet perhaps mastered a hundredth part of the use of plants. Then, if we were to think of the wonders of growth and assimilation,—why it is, that when you put in here a seed, you have a plant which employs itself in secreting poison, and when you put in another seed close to it, you have a plant which concocts human nutriment, and both of them producing these different results always in exactly the same proportions—what a question lies before us, and something so entirely different from our usual cogitations.

Ellesmere. Very interesting, not in the least recreative ! You have cultivated many things, my dear fellow, but a judicious cultivation of listlessness has been entirely

omitted by you. In travel, thoughts and ideas come to you. You do not fatigue yourself by rushing out to find them.

Milverton. There is a great deal of annoyance always in travelling.

Ellesmere. Granted. But the annoyances are somewhat different from those at home, and change is what we want.

Milverton. Then, there are the ladies. There are not many parts of Europe, to my mind, quite fit for English ladies.

Ellesmere. Well, we will keep to the most civilised places, to the most beaten tracks ; I have never, as yet, half seen any foreign town that I have seen.

Milverton. Besides we shall have so many pictures and works of art to see. I am tired of seeing pictures. I have such a number of them in my own mind as yet unpainted, and I am content with these. By the way, did I ever tell you that before I went to Venice, I said jokingly (dreading the pictures I should have to see) that I would only look at six and a half, and that Mr. Ruskin should direct me if he liked ? To my astonishment and pleasure I found a letter from Mr. Ruskin at Venice, directing me which six and a half I was to see. I had already, however, been lugged through several galleries. Thenceforward I kept to the six and a half. His choice seemed to me admirable, especially the half picture, which I went three times to see.

Ellesmere. An extraordinary event for you. But what do you mean by a half picture ?

Milverton. Oh ! one-half was not worth looking at,

and the other was transcendently beautiful. Mr. Ruskin kept to his agreement, and did not delude me into seeing seven pictures instead of six and a half.

Dunsford. You were saying that you had a great number of unpainted pictures always in your mind?

Milverton. Should you like to have any of them? It is curious, but I have been painting two companion pictures ever since we have been walking about in the garden. One consists of some dilapidated garden architecture, with overgrown foliage of all kinds, not forest foliage; but that of rare trees such as the Sumach and Japan-Cedar, which should have been neglected for thirty years. Here and there, instead of the exquisite parterre, there should be some miserable patches of potatoes and beans, and some squalid clothes hung out to dry. Two ill-dressed children, but of delicate features, should be playing about an ugly neglected pool that had once been the basin to the fountain. But the foliage should be the chief thing, gaunt, grotesque, rare, beautiful, like an unkempt, uncared-for, lovely mountain girl. Underneath this picture :—‘Property in the country, in chancery.’

The companion picture, of course, should be :—‘Property in town, in chancery.’ It should consist of two or three hideous, sordid, window-broken, rat-deserted, paintless, blackened houses, that should look as if they had once been too good company for the neighbourhood, and had met with a fall in life, not deplored by any one. At the opposite corner should be a flaunting new gin-palace. I do not know whether I should have the heart to bring any children there, but I would if I could.

Ellesmere. Well, your pictures are delightful, certainly, and possess all that serene cheerfulness which is the highest product of Art ; at least they would do so if there was a thriving lawyer's house in the background. But seriously, Milverton, we will not ask you to see a single picture ; and if you will come with us and bring Miss Mildred and Miss Blanche, I will go with you and see seven of the chief sewers in seven of the chief towns, and if that is not an inducement to offer to a sanitarian, I do not know what is. Is it a bargain ? Do not think to increase the high terms I offer by any chaffering. My terms are Sibylline. Is it a bargain ?

Milverton. It is.

I may as well explain more fully here who Mildred Vernon and Blanche Vernon are—the two young ladies who accompanied us on this tour. They are wards of mine, as well as cousins of Milverton's. Since the marriage of my niece, Lucy Daylmer, they have occasionally lived with me, and have sometimes been on a visit to their cousin, but their home has chiefly been with their other guardian in London. They are orphans. They are both very intelligent girls, but intelligent in different ways. Mildred resembles her cousin Milverton. She is very well read, indeed has been quite studious for a girl, and is an alert, enthusiastic person, caring much about what goes on in the world. Blanche, on the contrary, cares only

for what is near to her, and is a household sort of person. When she was younger, and I occasionally directed her education, she would learn dutifully anything that I gave her to learn : but it excited no curiosity in her, and she did not care to follow it up. She said her lesson to please me, and there was an end of it. Mildred, on the other hand, was absolutely tiresome to teach, because she would know all about what she was learning, tormenting me with sharp questions, and demanding to have everything explained to her satisfaction. They are both beautiful ; at least I think so ; and their beauty corresponds to their characters. There is a touch of imperiousness in Mildred's blue eyes, somewhat added to by her dark eyebrows and eyelashes,—an unusual combination. She has that form of beauty which is often to be seen in all classes at Limerick, and which they are said to derive from Spanish ancestry. In Blanche's countenance all is smooth and rounded, gracious and impressible. It is a trite remark to make, but really Nature does seem to amuse herself sometimes in making members of the same family so widely diverse that they seem to be representatives of different races. And yet, on closer knowledge, you almost always find the family relationship strictly maintained in some points, either of voice, handwriting, gesture, or tem-

perament—in likings or dislikings. This too, occurs in cases where the children have been educated widely apart, and have not seen one another for years together. Two brothers, brought up in different hemispheres, will yet write exactly alike, and the gesture of one as he walks down the street, perhaps with his back to you, and almost a stranger, will immediately remind you of the other, whom you have known from childhood. Ah what a beautiful thing is relationship, beautiful in its likenesses and in its diversities ; but we men do not make of it what we might. That direful familiarity, which few people know how to guide and govern, prevents or disfigures so much affection. Still, relationship remains one of the most delightful things in the world. But I must not go on moralising, and must keep such thoughts for my sermons, when my hearers are obliged to listen to me ; whereas, if I go on now in this strain, my readers may very judiciously put down the book. Besides, I am hindering them, as I said before, from better things.

CHAPTER I.

WORRY.

“THEY may say what they like against the Rhine ; that it is vulgarised, that it is cockneyfied ; that it is not so grand as the Danube or the Rhone ; but, take it altogether, it is the most charming river in Europe to my mind. I do not wonder at the passionate affection which our friends the Germans have for it. There are five or six great cities which I love very much : Milan, Venice, Genoa, Cadiz, Edinburgh (when it is very warm), and Dublin ; but I do not know that I ever have more pleasure than in pottering about these small towns on the Rhine, as we are now doing. Of course it is an additional pleasure to me that there are no picture-galleries or works of art to be seen.”

Thus it was that Milverton began a conversation one day, after an early German dinner, when we had sauntered out upon the terrace of some small town on

the Rhine. I forget whether it was Andernach, or Boppard, or some town on the opposite side of the river. Milverton, Ellesmere, and Mr. Midhurst were smoking; "more usefully employed," as Ellesmere said, than Blanche or Mildred, who were working at little bits of embroidery; "more harmlessly employed," so he was pleased to say, than Dunsford, as he was sure that I was meditating an increase to my stock of sermons, and that I was just working in a simile "quite new," about the resemblance of the flow of a river to the course of human life. Milverton took up the question of smoking, and the conversation proceeded thus:—

Milverton. Ah, what a blessing this smoking is! perhaps the greatest that we owe to the discovery of America; and what a pity it is that so good a thing should be so much abused! You see a young man consuming immense quantities of this potent herb at a time of life when it is peculiarly injurious; when he needs activity rather than calmness; and before he has laid in that stock of vexations which are sometimes so judiciously and so wisely regarded amidst the fragrant wreaths of this beneficent weed. Instead of beginning at fourteen, thirty-five would be a much better age to commence smoking.

Ellesmere. With what fierce indignation a company of young gentlemen would receive this sentiment of our philosophic friend!

Milverton. I suspect it is sound doctrine, nevertheless, though the young gentlemen might not like it.

Ellesmere. Well, Milverton, but are you sure that the troubles of life go on increasing? Do not the young feel what troubles they have with an acuteness unknown to us? If these pretty pieces of embroidery were to be spoilt now, or the boxes of rubbish which these girls are accumulating as presents to their friends, were to fall overboard from the steamer into the Rhine, would not the anguish of Miss Mildred and Miss Blanche considerably exceed yours and mine when a Bill is lost in Parliament, which you and I care about, or when some piece of property goes wrong, or when we find our seeming friends become our enemies, while amidst gloom, sickness, and disappointment we discern our powers of protecting ourselves gradually decaying? For my part, instead of limiting smoking, I think I would extend it to women, and perhaps even to the so-called "inferior" animals. How noble our bull-dog Fixer would look with a pipe in his mouth. But give some answer, Milverton, to my question about the troubles of girls and boys. Are they not most acute?

Milverton. Yes, they are very acute; but they are simple in their nature. They are not large, varied, perplexed, and cumbered with all the bewildered feelings of nice responsibility. These are the troubles for which there is occasionally great virtue in smoke. The best thing I ever read about smoking was by an anonymous author in *Blackwood*, who said, if I recollect the substance of his remarks, that it seemed to arrest Time for you, and to give you a keen sensation of the present.

Now Mr. Lewes has shown, in his admirable essay on "Suicide,"* that it is a mistake as to time which has probably led to many a suicide. The imagination of the tormented man presents to him long lines of evil occurrences marching in upon him at the same time. Prac-

* I subjoin an extract from this remarkable paper, which has pleased me much, and I dare say will please others as much :—

"This trite experience of the instability of human happiness has an obverse aspect which should give consolation in moments of affliction. The same uncertainty which attends our forecastings of success and happiness, equally attends our forecastings of failure and misery. The radiance is not more liable to be overclouded than the darkness is to be irradiated. We cannot foresee truly ; we can only imagine something that *may* occur ; and these imaginations are always wrong, if not as to the event itself, yet as to the degree in which the event will affect us. Let the worst he foresees arrive, it will reach the victim as something very different from what he imagined. The crash arrives ; nothing could—nothing did avert it ; it is here, and he is a beggar. His wife and children are beggars. Nay, worse than all, he is disgraced : deeds come to light which cause him to blush deeply when revealed, although he blushed but slightly, perhaps, in doing them. Everything, then, that he dreaded has arrived ? True : but not *as* he feared it. Now he is face to face with it, the terror vanishes. His strength is greater, and his sorrow less. Bankruptcy, if painful, is found to be endurable. Poverty turns out a comparatively slight evil—considerably less than a toothache. Even the shame against which sensitive pride revolted is not so terrible as imagination pictured it ; although, being an intellectual pain, and indefinite in its nature, imagination continues to exercise a control over it. Men do not look their scorn at him as he passes. His wife and children do not shrink from him, but cling with closer fondness, consoling him for the neglect of others. The dog licks his hand as before. The tradesman is as cap-in-hand for custom. The heart still beats, and Heaven is

tically, Mr. Lewes maintains, they do not come in this way. Evil, as well as good, is unpunctual, and often fails in keeping its appointments. But I will read the whole essay to you when we get back to Worth-Ashton, and are once more amidst my dear swine and beloved oxen. You apprehend, however, the gist of the argument. While smoking, you cease for the moment to live wholly in the future, which miserable men do for the most part, to the great increase of their misery.

Ellesmere. Then, after all, disappointed affection is not so great a misfortune as it has been accounted. It does not need a cigar, according to our philosopher. This is a comfort, Mr. Midhurst, for you and me. Mr. Midhurst was telling me this morning that he had never tasted a canvas-back duck,—at least, in good preservation : and he inoculated me with his sorrow and his disappointment to that degree, that we have both been very melancholy ever since ; but these disappointed affections are not to be soothed by light and trivial things like a cigar.

It amuses me to see that Milverton makes so light of the miseries of affection, while he is so tender about the

above all. . . . In this simple fact, that we cannot accurately foresee the future, lies a refuge from despair.

‘ The Greeks said grandly in their tragic phrase—
 “ Let no one be called happy till his death,”
 To which I add—“ Let no one till his death
 Be called unhappy.” ’ (*Aurora Leigh*.)”

—“ Suicide in Life and Literature,” *Westminster Review*, July, 1857.

woes and worries of middle-aged men of business. Commend me to a philosopher for taking a thoroughly one-sided view of any question.

Milverton. Ah, you do not estimate, or you pretend not to estimate, the cares and troubles of the middle-aged; whereas I must confess that, even in a novel, I often feel more for the mother, who is but a lay figure, than for the daughter, who, though she goes through sore troubles——

Ellesmere. Requiring many cigars in the course of the first, second, and the first half of the third volumes——

Milverton. Is yet eventually to blaze out into a successful marriage, while the poor mother——

Ellesmere. Is to become a mere mother-in-law.

But stop, Milverton; if you are so hard-hearted as not to admit the full misery of disappointed affection, at least you will allow that there is one cause of suffering pertaining to the young which is immensely potent in its nature. I mean false shame, a misery which you really seem to have forgotten.

When a young man, or young woman, does or says something in society which is either ill-timed, ill-advised, indiscreet, or simply ridiculous, there is scarcely any estimate which can be made sufficiently great to represent the suffering which the unhappy blunderer will contrive to get out of this small social misadventure.

I am a hardened lawyer now. Blushing is not my forte; but I could blush all over, if I chose to recall minutely a little misery of that kind which I brought upon myself some eighteen years ago, from saying, in the innocence and guilelessness of my heart, some particularly

indiscreet thing, which for a few minutes startled a whole company into silence.

You talk of smoking not being necessary for the untroubled natures of the young, but if smoking could have done any good to me in that case (which I don't think it could), I would have smoked a barrel of cigars, and should have been content to have been made very ill, in order to have escaped the oppressing recollection of my folly.

Miss Vernon and Miss Blanche know very well—whether they choose to confess it is another thing—that if they have entered a drawing-room with their gowns not quite settled, or any little matter of dress awry about them, they go home thoroughly miserable, cry for some hours before they get to sleep, and believe for a week afterwards that the whole company did nothing else but observe the ill-settled dress, or the awry flimsiness—whatever it was—and that the chief talk of the room was about them.

In the supreme art of self-tormenting there is nothing like the vigorous imagination of a very young person who thinks that he or she has made himself or herself unpleasantly remarkable in good society.

Mr. Midhurst. I declare Sir John has made quite an eloquent speech upon false shame, or rather upon exaggerated shame, and all he has said is very true—indeed when he tells us how he could blush now at the mere recollection of this long past indiscretion, it gives us a fearful notion of the burning power of shame.

Milverton. I admit it was an oversight of mine not to have taken into account the sufferings of the young from

false shame, and I stand corrected, but am still not disposed to vary the result of my conclusions about the relative sufferings of youth and middle-age.

Ellesmere. I make a proposition to this worshipful company—that Milverton be entreated to write an essay upon Worry. His having said that he would write no more essays is an additional reason for his writing it. I never heard Madame Grisi with more delight than the time immediately after “the very last time” that she was to sing. So, no doubt, it will be with Milverton’s first essay after the very last. People will become enamoured of worry, finding it so well written about.

Milverton (pretending to talk to himself). Let me see: First section, Law in general : second section, Common law : third, Chancery law : fourth, Lawyers in private life : fifth, Lawyers in Parliament. (Aloud.) Yes, I will write an essay on Worry, and read it here to-morrow at this very hour. But you must not expect it to be very searching or extensive. Besides, everything about us here is so calm and pleasant : my companions are so unlike co-committee men, co-trustees, co-executors, co-vestrymen (excepting of course, Ellesmere, who is the arch-vestryman, who objects to everything proposed by everybody), that I shall find it difficult to bring myself into a thoroughly worried state of mind.

Ellesmere. Nonsense ! Do not all the coxcombs who write about Art say, that serenity is the first requisite ? that a man should *have* suffered, and not be suffering at the moment when he produces or describes ? Look at Fixer. That dog is exactly in the state of mind for the production of works of Art. For second-rate artists, how-

ever,—essayists and the like—whether their minds are serene or clouded, it does not much matter. To-morrow then, I say, to-morrow, looking serenely from this beautiful terrace, after watching some great raft go down the river, we will listen to the woes of busy men, and think with joy that we have still six weeks of our holidays left to us.

On the morrow we came to the terrace, and Milverton read the following essay :—

THE great characteristic of modern life is
Worry.

If the Pagan religion still prevailed, the new goddess, in whose honour temples would be raised and to whom statues would be erected in all the capitals of the world, would be the goddess Worry. London would be the chief seat and centre of her sway. A gorgeous statue, painted and enriched after the manner of the ancients (for there is no doubt that they adopted this practice, however barbarous it may seem to us), would be set up to the goddess in the West-end of the town: another at Temple Bar, of less ample dimensions and less elaborate decoration, would receive the devout homage of worshippers who came to attend their lawyers in that quarter of the

town: while a statue, on which the cunning sculptor should have impressed the marks of haste, anxiety, and agitation, would be sharply glanced up at, with as much veneration as they could afford to give to it, by the eager men of business in the City.

The goddess Worry, however, would be no local deity, worshipped merely in some great town, like Diana of the Ephesians; but, in the market-places of small rural communities, her statue, made somewhat like a vane, and shifting with every turn of the wind, would be regarded with stolid awe by anxious votaries belonging to what is called the farming interest. Familiar too and household would be her worship; and in many a snug home, where she might be imagined to have little potency, small and ugly images of her would be found as household gods—the Lares and Penates—near to the threshold and ensconced above the glowing hearth.

The poet, always somewhat inclined to fable, speaks of Love as ruling

“The court, the camp, the grove,
And men below, and heaven above;”

but the dominion of Love, as compared with that of Worry, would be found, in the number of subjects, as the Macedonian to the Persian—in extent of territory, as the county of Rutland to the empire of Russia.

Whence comes the power of this great goddess? what are the scourges that she wields? To men of a certain age it is only necessary to mention some dread names which will at once recall to their minds her mighty influence, and make them desirous of propitiating her awful power. Law, repairs, taxation, partnership, executorship, trusteeship, bankruptcy, are some of the names, which, if pronounced before the most innocent and even the most cautious of men, will often act like a spell upon them, bringing a slight shudder through their frames and not a slight gloom over their countenances. If they are blessed with progeny, one has only to mention the words education and furtherance of children, to tame them down a little in case their spirits should ever be too bounding.

Perhaps, however, it is in minor matters that the power of Worry is pre-eminently conspicuous. When we think of voting, testimonial-giving, attendance at public dinners, attendance on committees, management of servants, buying and selling, and, last and greatest, correspondence by letter—a trouble which you mow down each day, and each day see a new crop rising up for the scythe—we can form some slight notion of the power of the great goddess Worry.

What contrivances there are in modern life for losing time and adding to worry! Consider the distances in

a great capital that have to be traversed upon the most trivial occasions, the various social annoyances that have to be encountered—visits as tiresome to the person visiting as to the person visited—the duties and responsibilities of a witness, a juryman, a creditor, a godfather, a trustee.

Then there is the worry of pleasure, which is often accompanied by all the difficulty, the tiresomeness, and the monotony of business, without any attendant credit or inward satisfaction of mind. See what a tyrant is fashion; and how much every one endures in the way of dress in order to disfigure himself as much as the rest of mankind, and to avoid being hooted by little boys in the streets.

Then consider the worry connected with conjoint action: how, when you are acting with others, you are never certain of being up to time; and how it requires a long and painful experience of the world before you learn to make allowance for the necessary variation in your calculations which results from other men's backwardness, unpunctuality, and even their reasonable hindrances. There is nothing like certainty in any transaction where you have colleagues. This man, just at the point of time when you relied upon him, is ill; that man torn by domestic affliction;

a third indifferent to the project which he had hitherto been sanguine about: a fourth won over to the enemy, while you, assured of his adherence, have been working in other directions and neglecting him. The army is to concentrate upon a certain point at a certain time; but this marshal has lost his way, and that one has been beaten on the road; and one is stupid, and another is traitorous, and a third is unlucky; and at last you find, that to have ensured success, you must yourself have been everywhere at the same time. These things happen too in private life; for the ordinary affairs of man are not very different from war, diplomacy, and government; and the impartial goddess Worry finds time to attend to private and most obscure persons.

Indeed it is such persons—commonplace unromantic people, who are not likely to cut any figure in history—that are mainly thought of in this essay. Pity is sure to be given, and is justly due, to a Charles the Fifth in his old age, lying sick at Innsprück, the clouds of ill-fortune gathering round him from all quarters, and each post bringing intelligence of Duke Maurice's stealthy and treacherous approach:—to the sorry ending of a Columbus, who was to gain so little himself from the discovery of a New World:—to the struggles of a Napoleon during

his closing campaign, grasping still at great projects which he could not hope to realise, and the stern facts coming daily to him, a master of facts, which contradicted all his hopes:—to many a poet like Dante or Camöens, who has to sing what song he may, amidst the most sordid and miserable accompaniments of poverty, exile, imprisonment, and debt. But all our pity must not be given to these high-raised examples of men suffering from the great or small miseries of human life; and the ordinary citizen, even of a well-settled state, who, with narrow means, increasing taxation, approaching age, failing health, and augmenting cares, goes plodding about his daily work thickly bestrewed with trouble and worry (all the while, perhaps, the thought of a sick child at home being in the background of his mind), may also, like any hero of renown in the midst of his world-wide and world-attracting fortune, be a beautiful object for our sympathy. The suffering, no doubt, is great of the conquered general, reluctantly hurried by his attendants from the field of battle, who thinks with anguish how differently he would play the game if he had to play it over again. But neither is the suffering light of any one of the peasants whose charred and blackened home the conquerors and the conquered press unheeding over.

To return to the worry incident upon conjoint action: if the matter upon which a man is engaged in conjoint action with others be a great matter, something that may be dignified by the name of "a cause," what an amount of life-long trouble there is to any person sincerely embarking in it! What an immense number of people have to be persuaded, silenced, or tired out, before anything good can be done! How uncertain it is whether such a subject will surge up at the right time! how the cause becomes encrusted with fools, and bores, and vain men, who hinder its progress far more than the marine creatures that stick to the keels of vessels, hinder theirs; and thus it is that the men, who of all others should, for the highest interests of mankind, be least obstructed by worry of all sorts, are often those who have to endure, and if they would succeed, to bear down the most of it. That delicate German writer, Jean Paul, says somewhere, when magnifying the office of a learned writer, that kings and princes should sit in dutiful humility upon the bench before him: and so, when a notable man comes into the world, resolutely bent on doing some good in it, and giving fair promise of ability to work, the world could scarcely spend its time better than in defending such a man from all the small cares, hindrances, and

worries which seem to grow up in greater profusion under his feet than under those of other men, and often make him a victim instead of a defender.

The especial plague of modern life lies in the perpetual acts of decision which it requires, while at the same time the power of decisiveness is enlightened, encumbered, and often deadened, as the generations of men proceed, by more insight, more forethought, and a constant increase of the sense of nice responsibility. The great Von Humboldt went into the cottages of South American Indians, and, amongst an unwrinkled people, could with difficulty discern who was the father and who was the son, when he saw the family assembled together. These comfortable Indians took misfortune when it came, without regret, without much looking back, without much looking forward; bearing it with the exemplary patience of a dumb animal. It would, perhaps, be not too much to say, that a man living in a highly-civilised community, makes, at some expense of thought and suffering (if indeed we can dissociate the two things, for steady thought is a kind of suffering) four hundred decisions whilst the savage makes one.

No sane man is likely to talk now as Rousseau did, and to magnify beyond measure the blessings of a savage life; but it may be well occasionally to pause

in the midst of counting our gains from civilization, and, looking at the other side, to see in what directions worry invades and torments us most successfully—also to study how she may best be resisted. This last investigation may be resolved into two branches: the art of abridging needless annoyance and the art of taking things coolly.

How much might be done, for instance, in studying taxation with reference to the abridgement of needless annoyance; yet how rarely we find that statesmen enter with any heartiness into financial discussions, except with regard to the amounts to be raised—in short, how little they seem to care about the worry endured by the tax-paying subject.

In physical matters, too, such as the building of houses, how much might be done to avoid worry. Fire insurance is a great field for the influence of our goddess; yet by a little skill and resolve we might baffle her completely there.

But, perhaps, the field where she might be encountered with most chance of success would be that of social intercourse amongst men. A late prime minister, who was not in the habit of confiding much, once confessed to a foreign ambassador that social claims weighed heavily upon him as a minister: *i.e.*,

that the necessity for being ever before the public which seems to lie upon an English minister was an afflicting burden to him,—as indeed it must be to every man who wishes to do good and lasting work. Now this demand upon a statesman, and others like to it, show a sad want of consideration on the part of the public. All men of eminence in any department suffer greatly from demands upon their time and attention, which may be very natural on the part of the people making them, but at the same time are very unreasonable and substantially unkind; and a wise man who cared for himself alone, if such a man there be, would almost as soon part with obscurity as with life itself, so deadly a thing in a large and civilized community is the possession, often wildly coveted, of any kind of notoriety.

The late Duke of Wellington is reported to have said that he answered every letter addressed to him. I have sometimes thought that that very great man did something to diminish his claim to public gratitude if he ever made such a remark. A great many letters are so intrusive in their nature that they deserve to be neglected. If a man, whose time is valuable, does answer readily to every foolish claim upon his attention, the important things which he could do well and where his energy is most needed, run some chance of

being put aside. And often the neglect of these important things is less visible than any breach or intermission of mere routine work, such as the answering of common letters. The best kind of work often makes least show.

It were well that some skilful essayist should write a short treatise on the art of taking things coolly. Look at the labour that men give even to their sports, with their game-books, and their skilful apparatus, and their fox-covers, and their preserves. That form of pleasure has altogether entered into the domain of tiresome business. And now to moralise upon ourselves. What an elaborate worry we travellers almost always make of travelling ; how resolved we are to see more than can possibly be seen with profit or comfort : how much too large and comprehensive our plans are : how seldom we let ourselves be carried away by any real, present enjoyment : and how we have ever ringing in our ears the names of great cities and remarkable mountains, the limits of our journeys, which we are resolved to compass the sight of, let the trouble or worry be ever so great. Then we are resolved to "do," as we say, these towns so thoroughly that we scamper about them like wild animals with something attached to their tails, and at the end we have a

jumble in our memory of all the things we have seen ; whereas the profit of a journey is to have a very clear recollection of what you do recollect at all, so that in troubled moments and in the midst of a busy life, sitting by a sea-coal fire and glancing into the “long unlovely London street,” some bright and perfect view of Venice, of Genoa, or of Monte Rosa comes back to you, and is as full of repose as a day wisely spent in travel. On a journey, so far from being anxious to exhaust everything at once, and so to mix in your memory the most heterogeneous elements, you should always think that you will come again that way, and take up all the stitches that have fallen through this time. Sincerity and coolness are the two requisites for enjoying a journey : sincerity, to prevent you from worrying yourself by looking at things which you do not really care about, and which you will only have to talk about in future (why should you care to talk about them ?), and coolness, that you may have your wits, and your soul, and your powers of observation at liberty to disport themselves. You have mostly come away from business. Why take up a new trade—the irksome trade of travel ?

But the grand source of worry, compared with which perhaps all others are trivial, lies in the com-

plexity of human affairs, especially in such an era of civilization as our own. I was much surprised to find a complaint of this complexity in an author like Goethe, whom I should have expected to find on the other side. He says :—

“The natives of old Europe are all badly off. Our affairs are by far too artificial and complicated ; our diet and mode of life want nature, and our social intercourse is without love and benevolence. Every one is smooth and polite, but no one is bold enough to be candid and true, and an honest man, a man of natural learning and sentiments, is in a very awkward position. It makes one wish to be born in the South Sea Islands, as a so-called savage, if it were only to get a pure and unadulterated enjoyment of human life.”

Look at the niceties of law, with which all men are presumed to be acquainted, but of which no private person knows anything, until he finds that he, or his partners, or his predecessors, have committed or omitted, some trivial thing, which may, however, be fatal to his fortunes. Look at the tenure of land, which is often such as to ensure worry even to the most careful person. The largest city in the world is mainly built on leasehold land,—which mode of tenure an eminent person of the present day maintains to be a sufficient cause in itself for the bad

building of that city. Thence come all manner of contracts with respect to sub-letting, and with respect to fire-insurance, and all manner of restrictions which hinder usefulness, prevent improvement, and create worry in abundance.

I have not hitherto alluded to the vexation and worry occasioned by the confusion which prevails in law-making, especially in a free country. If those could be consulted on whom the law is to act, many grievances and vexations might be avoided. As it is, a new law, generally completed in a hurry, and being the subject of innumerable compromises, is a thoroughly tentative process, and probably requires amendment before it has begun to work.

If we turn to that great branch of parliamentary law which comes under the head of Private Bills, we shall find that matters are still worse in this direction. In fact, you have only to mention the words "Private Bill" to any person who has had experience in such transactions, and even if he be of a very placid nature, the chances are that he will break out into a passion, and narrate to you grievances so intolerable that he imagines he is the only unlucky person who has endured them.

We have already touched upon the miseries and worries of conjoint enterprise. Well, indeed, might Sixtus the Fifth exclaim,—“He that has partners has masters!” and he might have added, “He that has subordinates has torments.” Hardly anybody knows how to obey. Indeed it requires a very clever man, and a scrupulous one, to be obedient. All persons who have been in command will tell you of the sufferings they have endured from subordinates thinking for themselves, as they say, and acting for themselves, on occasions when supreme obedience is necessary. Men in command have no time to explain; and this law holds good from great generals down to the masters of one or two servants. The Duke of Wellington issues orders that certain divisions of the Peninsular army are to move in a certain direction, by a road not the shortest, and not apparently the best. Before dawn he is on the road. The troops do not come. The Duke, rightly conjecturing what had happened, gallops off to the other route, and surprises these divisions by his presence at a point where it was impossible to pass, but at which, knowing how likely men are to disobey orders, he expects, and fears to find them.*

* *Vide* Napier, *War in the Peninsula*, iv. p. 385.

Such being the difficulties of acting with others, whether as equals or subordinates, it might have been expected that none but shrewd and strong men would have the courage to embark in adventures over which they are likely to have so loose and wavering a hold. But, strange to say, the persons, generally speaking, who are most attracted by the apparent benefits to be derived from conjoint enterprises, are the least fitted to embark in such undertakings, requiring, as they do, a bustling tiresomeness, a questioning activity, and considerable knowledge of affairs to begin with. From the absence, however, of these qualities in many of those persons who have embarked in great enterprises, it comes that, borne by steam, we travel over railroad lines laid, if I may so express it, in the ruin of unnumbered families. We cannot wonder that Charles Lamb should speak of the "sweet simplicity of the three per cents;" yet it would be ruinous to a nation if everybody studied this simplicity in the arrangement of his fortune; and as a large majority of men would almost rather be ruined than be inactive or non-enterprising, all one can do in warning men against the miseries and worries incident to conjoint action, is just to suggest to them whether they are the fit persons to enter upon such undertakings.

Then come the worries, not by any means unnoticed in this age, inflicted by routine. Now routine is not to be despised. If you were ever to see a business which demands a considerable amount of routine attempted to be carried on by too little routine, or by none, you would almost be surprised at the magnitude of the evils that arise from this neglect. Yet if carried beyond bounds, and routine seldom knows where to stop, what a fertile source of worry it becomes.

Worry is so extensive a subject that you might descant upon it from early morn to lingering eve of the longest day of the year, and yet leave many of the fields of its operation unploughed and in fallow. I might have spoken, for instance, of the worry of education—not as regards one's self alone, but as regards the education of those about one, and under one, whose welfare must be attended to. In these days, when little is to go by favour, and much by proficiency, this form of worry is terribly increased. It is sometimes forgotten that each generation has somehow or other to teach the next. There may be more skilful elementary works than there used to be, but this gain is more than counterbalanced by the increased quantity of knowledge that is now

demande of every one ; and babies do not come into the world a bit wiser or more learned than they used to come.

Again, I might have touched upon the worry connected with charity, which once was a simple matter, or at least seemed to be so, but now is encumbered with all manner of questions relating to political economy, and has to deal with such a complex state of affairs that the most benevolent men are perfectly bewildered, not only as to what to give, but whether to give at all, and how to give.

Finally, I might have commented at length, and with painful details, upon the worry of keeping up appearances, upon the worry of governing servants, upon the worry of maintaining a household, upon the worry of buying and selling ; but I forbear. Enough has been said, or at least suggested, with reference to social, domestic, political, educational, legal, financial, military, and politico-economical worries, to indicate the extent and influence of the great goddess, whose powers I began this essay by enlarging upon, and to show that her empire is larger than the Assyrian, the Median, the Roman, the Gallic, or the Anglian,—that, in fact, she not only rules over a territory on which the sun never sets, but even that the dark

hours of the night are peopled by her myrmidons, and that men's dreams are by no means freed from her overpowering and oppressive sway.



Ellesmere. Catch me asking again for any more essays ! You have brought back all the nuisances of life so vividly that you have made me quite uncomfortable. Our six weeks will soon be over, and we shall be in the thick of all this trouble again. But your remedies, my man, your remedies ! True art should always be healing and restorative. I think nothing of the man who only makes one uncomfortable. I hate tragedies, and the people who write them.

Milverton. Great sorrows absorb all minor evils.

Ellesmere. Is that meant for comfort ?

Milverton. Yes. Let a man think, when he is immersed in all manner of vexations, what it would be to have a real sorrow ; and all that has been vexing him will seem for the moment trivial.

Dunsford. These high thoughts are the true consolations.

Ellesmere. Yes, yes, my dear Dunsford, of course we know all these things, and they are very proper for you to say ; but the ingenious Milverton is sure to have twenty or thirty odd, out-of-the-way modes of consolation : " Lights, easements, watercourses, privileges," as we lawyers say in a lease.

Mr. Midhurst. The multiplicity of annoyances in life—each pulling in a different direction from the others, and demanding a man's attention—keep the mind in equilibrium, and leave the man his sanity.

Ellesmere. A great comfort, no doubt.

Mr. Midhurst. I have found it so.

Ellesmere. No turtle ! no Perigord pie ! The salmon spoilt on the journey ! The canvas-back duck utterly ruined by the voyage ! Washy melted butter ! Ludicrous bread-sauce, made by a country cook !—Mr. Midhurst's mind preserves its equilibrium, and Mr. Midhurst eats bread and cheese thankfully. Yes, I understand that. The failure of the salmon alone would have been a calamity too great to be borne. But what says Milverton ? Where are his consolations ?

Milverton. Very few people fully appreciate the fun of civilized life. It is an immense compensation for the other evils. There is ludicrous mismanagement in some department of human affairs : it comes to light : while instantly there are bustle and discussion ; wit, humour, sophistry, and wisdom are all brought to bear upon the peccant part. Gradually some improvement is made ; and, meanwhile, mankind have had a great deal of amusement and instruction out of the affair.

Ellesmere. True : but I should like to hear now, how some part of this needless worry is to be prevented.

Milverton. One great remedy would be in a better direction of man's work. It is astonishing how much lost labour there is in the world. This would be an important subject to follow out. I might have some difficulty in showing the close connection that there is

between misplaced labour and the vexations of mankind ; but there is such a connection.

Ellesmere. Instances ! instances ! Give us hosts of instances. The first that come to hand.

Milverton. Well, I will tell you the very last thing that struck me of this kind. As we passed through London I happened to notice a great many stonemasons at work : and what do you think they were doing ? What I am going to say is almost incredible, and yet the fact is very common. They were resolutely chipping holes in the stones, in order that they might look like rough stones brought from the quarries without having been worked there. In some great building somewhere or other——

Mr. Midhurst. The Pitti Palace at Florence.

Milverton. Such stones have been put into the lower parts of the building, and consequently it had been thought good sense and good taste to do the same thing in London, the unfittest place in the world for such ornamentation. These holes soon become receptacles of dirt, and add to the general squalidity. Now such foolish expenditure as this is at the bottom of a great deal of bankruptcy, though it may not figure openly in the bankrupt's accounts. Thus folly is quietly developed into the higher stage of being called Worry. But come here, Ellesmere : you ask for instances. Turn round, with your back to the company. (Ellesmere did as he was bid.) Ladies and gentlemen, this is Sir John Ellesmere, a great lawyer, who is writing a treatise on contingent remainders, and who has a good reason for everything he says and does—and wears. May I ask, Sir John, whether you have ever made use of these four

buttons at the back of your coat? Indeed, lives there a man who has made use of them?

Ellesmere (taking his seat again). Oh, this is too absurd.

Milverton. No; it is not. I once asked a man who delights in statistics, how many of these needless buttons he thought had been made? I told him I really wanted some rough kind of estimate. He thought I was going to enter deeply into the mysteries of the button trade, and probably foresaw some motion in Parliament in which his calculations would come out with credit. In a few days he brought his calculation. It considerably exceeded 300 millions.—I forget the odd figures in which such calculators delight.

Ellesmere. Upon my word, it isn't so absurd. Besides there is the covering and the stitching and the sewing—am I not using the right words, Miss Mildred? But, *Milverton*, while you were about it, why did not you and your detestable statistical man honour the female sex with some of your attention? Why, even Miss Blanche and Miss Mildred are covered all over with needlessness, and each one of them has wasted more in good material than the 300 million buttons, for the use of which the male sex cannot perfectly account.

Blanche. Ah, but all we do in the way of dress makes more beauty in the world, whereas you men only make yourselves more absurd when you are in full dress.

Milverton. Then, what a subject furniture is when we are commenting on the useless. I suppose it often happens that at least a quarter of the work in any well-furnished room is useless and delusive—carefully finished

knobs to unreal drawers, sham pillars, sham cornices, sham bell-pulls, sham book-cases, in a word, scores of shams.

Ellesmere. Now, Milverton, go into large matters. Do not tell us things which Pugin and Ruskin and Scott and many others have been telling us for some time.

Milverton. Will you have something political which creates expense and worry, and which is at the same time not only useless, but very mischievous?

Ellesmere. Yes.

Milverton. The practice of members vacating their seats upon receiving certain government offices. Can you invent a better device for narrowing the Prime Minister in his choice of men to fill great offices—for bringing unnecessary expense and worry upon men at the precise point of time when all their energies are wanted in the difficult commencement of administration,—and for embarrassing government with pledges at the very moment when it ought to be least fettered? You may be the fittest man to be Attorney-General, but being a tiresomely honest individual, you are just the person to be rather shaky—if I may use the term—with your constituency, and liable to be defeated upon some crotchet of theirs which less scrupulous men would easily overcome.

Ellesmere. It is, it certainly is, a silly practice, and should be done away with as soon as possible, as a thing distinctly hindering the service of the state.

Mr. Midhurst. I would go much farther in the same direction, and am prepared to maintain that the greatest reform in parliament would be, the giving official seats in

either house to certain officers of government. These need not exceed ten or fifteen in number. There is not the slightest danger of their bringing too much power to the Crown ; and the wide range that they would give the Premier in choosing associates and subordinates would double his power of effective administration.

Dunsford. This is a plan, Mr. Midhurst, which Milverton has always urged upon us whenever we have been talking over these subjects. I am a Whig Parson, and have always looked up to Sydney Smith as a model of political thinking for a clergyman, but I cannot discern the least danger to the constitution in this proposed reform. If I did, I would oppose it, however much it might aid official men, and further good administration.

Ellesmere. Bravely spoken, my dear old tutor ; it is very clear to me, though, that you will never be a bishop, nor even wear the lesser apron of a dean. You must not speak out your sentiments so distinctly as you do. You do not give me the idea of being a safe man. A man to rise in the world should always be hazy in the expression of his opinions.

Dunsford. I do not want to rise in the world, Sir John ; and if I did want to rise in the world, I would not suppress my opinions, or endeavour to express them hazily, for all the bishoprics that ever were created.

Ellesmere. I call that rampant virtue ; but I know it is throwing pearls before unclean animals to scatter worldly wisdom in the way of Dunsford. So now to other matters. Give us some more instances, Milverton, of worry and waste. Feed me with facts. I dote upon facts.

Milverton. Take the whole question of adulteration——

Ellesmere. I won't stand this. I've heard enough of sanitary reform, and seen so little done in it, that I decline to stay here while Milverton exhausts seven blue-books, and succeeds in proving that some men are scoundrels, while others are fools and *fainéants*, and that the great mass of the public are gulled, and swindled, and poisoned to an almost unlimited extent. No, I will not.

Milverton. Now do sit down, Ellesmere, and listen for a few moments. I will really put the thing in a new light. You may remember, that in the course of the essay I put "buying and selling" as two of the fertile causes of worry. Now, consider what a serious thing it is that in any civilised community you have the greatest difficulty in buying the thing you want; that you are obliged to spend time, take great precautions, and make careful arrangements, if you wish to purchase any simple commodity; that there should be persons whose business it is with great skill to baffle and delude you when you are endeavouring to make this purchase. I put aside for the moment all question of humanity or inhumanity, and bring the matter under the head of needless worry. You are ordered to procure such a drug, or such an oil, or such a condiment, for your sick child. By hard work you have got the money. That is the first step in the process, and an important one; but after that is settled, you will find it quite an occupation to get the pure drug, and the right oil, and the unadulterated condiment.

Dunsford. Now don't talk in this cold, business-like

way. I do say that of all the iniquities on the face of the earth the most cruel and irredeemable is the sale of adulterated food to the poor. Here comes a poor labouring man. He has just done a hard stroke of work. He wants to slake his thirst, and you give him some confounded—

Ellesmere. Don't swear, my reverend friend.

Dunsford. You give him some detestable concoction pretending to be the thing he asks for, and it not only does not support his strength, but it does not assuage his thirst. Indeed it is so made as to increase thirst. He comes again and again for the vile draught. The poor fellow gets drunk, beats his wife perhaps, and I am sent for the next day to lecture him. I declare I am ashamed to do it sometimes, when I think how deeply guilty men of our own class and station are in this matter. The mischief is preventable. At any rate it might be greatly modified—so you official people tell me—Why don't you do it?

Ellesmere. Three cheers for our reverend demagogue! He is worthy of a triple apron. By Jove, if I become Lord Chancellor, you shall have all my livings (at least in succession), and shall go from living to living, preaching at each place a fiery sermon against the adulteration of beer.

Milverton. The magnitude of the evil is yet unknown to the public. A little time ago I went to see one of the great surgeons at the East end of the town—one of the principal surgeons of a large hospital. After we had finished the business I came about, we began to discuss sanitary matters, which he seemed more eager to enter

upon than I was, and he said to me :—"Half the cases that are brought to me are caused by the adulteration of food." What is the good of legislation, if it cannot reach such an evil as this ?

Ellesmere. Ah, how true are the words of *Ecclesiasticus*, "As a nail sticketh fast between the joinings of the stones ; so doth sin stick close between buying and selling."

Mr. Midhurst. Not one of you seems to have touched upon the higher branches of worry—worry on a great scale—national worry. Look at the fate of England. If ever there was a people that would be content to be quiet it is the English ; and see how we have been dragged over the continent by Plantagenets and Tudors and Stuarts, throwing away our money by sackfuls ; and now, at this advanced era in the world, we are still any day at the mercy of the most foolish of continental mankind. At any moment the proceedings of some small stupid despot, or wild democratic fanatic, may plunge us into a European war. When incendiary fires were frequent in England, it was often found that some idiot, or some stupid boy, was the wilful cause of it ; and so it often is with greater conflagrations. Our own people, if not eager to begin the fray, are very unwilling to close it ; and of course, ultimately, it has to be paid for by every kind of privation and misery. Neither does one see any clear remedy. We occupy a certain position in the world, and have the cares, the anxieties, the expenses, and the responsibilities belonging to such a position.

Milverton. A more saddening reflection to me is, the increasing influence and wider spread of commercial and

financial misfortunes, and to observe how quiet, innocent obscure persons, keeping to their own work in their own department, and who understand nothing about the rate of exchange, are quietly overwhelmed by some over-speculation in a distant part of the world, of which they scarcely know the name, and certainly know nothing about the geography. We are all so intertwined together now, that the same wave—I am speaking of financial and commercial waves—beats upon every shore, making wrecks everywhere ; even of those who seldom venture far from land.

Ellesmere. Now you have passed from worry to disaster. The only persons who are trained to keep to the subject they are discussing, are lawyers, and they do keep to it ; whereas even clergymen occasionally wander from the text : and as for authors—why Milverton would begin a paper on Bank stock, and end with a discussion on the Pelagian heresy ; and if you were to follow him throughout, the reasoning would be pretty close, and the connection between the two subjects self-evident—at least to his mind.

Mr. Midhurst. Well, I will keep to the subject closely in the next remark I make, which is one of approbation ; for I maintain, you are quite right, Milverton, in commenting severely upon the needless worry connected with taxation. I am sure that species of nuisance might be smoothed a little. The Assessed Taxes are a mine of worry.

Milverton. Yes : they are ; but my especial aversion is the Income Tax, chiefly on account of the trouble it gives, the temptation it offers to the unscrupulous, and the

torment that it is to the scrupulous. I suspect that men highly placed little know the trouble and vexation it is to men not so highly placed to describe and estimate their incomes, and still more what a trouble it is for lone women and ignorant persons to do so. As belonging to the former class, take men of letters, for instance, and poor professional men. Consider the bit and scrap way in which they get their money ; a guinea here, five guineas there, and so on ; and how, of necessity, irregular all these transactions must be. They have no person to keep their accounts for them : and though of course the keeping of accounts is a most desirable thing, it seems hard that a government should force it on men who can do without it.

But I confess I hate all compulsory returns. I see that there are many excellent people, statistically minded, who are bent upon getting farmers to make returns with respect to the land under cultivation. I hope with all my heart the farmers will steadily resist. If these statistical people want the information, let them get it for themselves. All information is purchaseable. If the managers of the *Times* wanted the information, and chose to go to the expense of getting it, of course they would get it. I wonder, by the way, whether any of these statistical people have ever managed land themselves ; whether they have ever entered into the difficulties of keeping farm accounts. Those who have, and who know what a labour both for mind and body the work of a good farmer is, will be slow to put upon him any additional burden or botheration.

But I object to the thing on general principles. The world is plagued enough with the returns that it has already to make, and as far as I can, I will resist its

having any more to make. As it is, too, we seldom know enough about the returns that we must deal with, and are often scarcely aware of what we are paying in rates and taxes when the claims for payment come in to us. It has been well said by somebody, that an Englishman will pay, or endeavour to pay, any demand made by any person, in the guise of a tax-gatherer, bringing any scrap of any paper having an official look about it.

Mr. Midhurst. What you were saying, Milverton, about the intrusions which men of any eminence have to endure, put me in mind of an eastern friend of mine. He was one of the foremost men in the town where he lived. His name was Ali Ben Hassan. I carried out letters of introduction to him from England; and, as I came to towns which were not far from his, many persons pressed upon me other missives of recommendation, all addressed to Ali Ben Hassan, "the Much-beloved." I was curious to see this Ali Ben Hassan, "the Much-beloved;" and, before going to any one else, went to him. He received me very courteously, but there was an unmistakeable air of weariness about the man, which, when I came to know him better, was easily accounted for. Ali took a fancy to me (perhaps it was because I could speak so little to him), and I sat often with him on his *musnud*. I noticed that whenever we were about to enjoy ourselves, and when his Nubian slave had handed the amber mouth-piece of his master's *chibouk* to him, poor Ali was not suffered to take many fragrant whiffs before some kinsman, or some neighbour, or some stranger came to demand aid, advice, or interference on the part of Ali Ben Hassan, "the Much-beloved." None of the applicants were shame-faced.

Why was he called "the Much-Beloved," if it was not his duty to assist all comers? Ali Ben Hassan seemed to think so too. No word of complaint ever fell from his grave lips as he pensively laid down the amber mouth-piece; and when he resumed it again, it was with the air of a man whose destiny it was never to enjoy any pleasure long.

At last the plague approached that town. I learnt of the impending calamity from the ominous whispers and frightened faces of my friends. Ali Ben Hassan also mentioned the fact; but not in a whisper, and certainly without the slightest sign of alarm: indeed, I almost fancied that I could trace a certain sort of satisfaction in his countenance when he communicated the intelligence to me.

The plague came: the plague raged. Almost every man avoided his fellow-man as if he were a lion. Ali Ben Hassan and I smoked our *chibouks* in silence, for the most part uninterrupted. One day I said to him:—"Ali Ben Hassan, how is it that thou art different from other men? Why is it that thou dost not fear the plague? Would not his townsmen miss 'the Much-beloved,' if the Angel of Death were to come into this abode, where the threshold is worn down by the footsteps of those who seek the generous man for his bounty, the wise man for his advice, the gracious man for his consolation?"

Ali Ben Hassan smiled a sad smile. "Listen," he said, "to the story of Ali Ben Hassan, 'the Much-beloved,' and the very wearied.

"Allah made me of a tender and pitiful heart: Allah made me a pleasant companion; and from my boyhood

upwards, all men have said to themselves: 'I am weary, I am sad, I am in trouble, I will go and see Ali Ben Hassan; mayhap he will comfort me.' The chief men of the city bid me to their feasts; the poor men also rely upon me as a guest. Even my wives do not become tired of my company. My kinsfolk, my friends, my acquaintances, and even the passers-by say:—'Let us go and talk with Ali Ben Hassan;' and each blames me because I am not always with him and uniformly intent upon his affairs; for am I not 'the Much-Beloved,' and do I not belong wholly to every one.

"There came a flight of quails from the desert. They darkened the air. Almost every one's house in the city was stored with these savoury birds. Men ran with gifts of them even to Noorsha Beg, my savage neighbour, who never said a good word, nor did a kind deed, for anybody. Ali Ben Hassan, 'the Much-beloved,' had no quails brought to him, though all his neighbours came to consult him as to what they should do with their abundance—but who cares to gratify 'the Much-beloved?' He must be content with a name. This neglect of my townsmen I care not for; but I would fain have some time to work for mine own necessities, and to think mine own thoughts. The favour which I have found with men is a burden to me, and yet I could not now bear to be without it. Thou wilt soon depart, O yellow-haired stranger from the West, and wilt return to thine own land. Let the seeds of wisdom fall upon a soil which the fruit-giving river has lately flowed over. Be not too much beloved, and live in peace. Thou seest this plague: it is a sore grief to me, for the men of the city fall fast; but it

gives me my only time of rest. Behold, have we not smoked out our *chibouks*, and the curtain has not been lifted aside! Go now: may Allah be with thee, and mayst thou never have a name greater than thou canst bear."

There were tears in the words of Ali Ben Hassan, for his voice was marvellously sweet and soft. And I journeyed on my way, and saw his face no more.

Ellesmere. Poor Ali Ben Hassan! I can well imagine how tenderly Mr. Midhurst sympathised with him—especially about the quails. I am happily not very famous yet, and certainly shall never be known as "John Ellesmere Ben Ellesmere, the Much-beloved;" but I can perceive what worry must attend upon overmuch popularity.

Blanche. What a delightful thing it is, that children, at least, escape this worry you have all been talking so eloquently about.

Milverton. Yes: I have never been more struck with that than when observing a family in the middle class of life going to the seaside. There is the anxious mother wondering how they shall manage to stow away all the children when they get down. Visions of damp sheets oppress her. The cares of packing sit upon her soul. Doubts of what will become of the house when it is left are a constant drawback from her thoughts of enjoyment; and she confides to the partner of her cares how willingly, if it were not for the dear children, she would stay at home. He, poor man, has not an easy time of it. He is meditating over the expense, and how it shall be provided for. He knows, if he has any knowledge of the world, that the said expense will somehow or other exceed any

estimate he and his wife have made of it. He is studying the route of the journey, and is perplexed by the various modes of going. This one would be less expensive, but would take more time. And then time always turns into expense on a journey. In a word, the old birds are as full of care and trouble as a hen with ducklings ; but the young birds ! Some of them have never seen the sea before, and visions of unspeakable delight fill their souls—visions that will almost be fulfilled. The journey, and the cramped accommodation, and the packing, and the everything out of place, are matters of pure fun and anticipated joy to them.

Ellesmere. Quite right, quite right. Let us enjoy life while we can. I too am a boy, and look ! there is the other boy Walter down by the river, making ducks and drakes with stones—which is really a delightful occupation. You have all the pleasure of feeling like a spendthrift without being one. I'll go and cut him out, and you may all go on talking about worry till you become as mournful as a very rich man who has made a questionable investment.

So saying Ellesmere rushed off to the water's edge : we followed more leisurely ; and so our conversation was broken up for that day.*

* What a comment upon Milverton's remarks with respect to intrusive letter-writing is furnished by the following notification, recently put forth by the great Humboldt :—"Overwhelmed by the number of letters sent me, which are increasing every day, amounting from 1,600 to 2,000 per annum—many, too, being on

the most futile subjects, such as demands for my autograph, and offers to cure me of all diseases—I once more make a public appeal to the persons who wish me well, and request them not to occupy themselves so much with what concerns me, in order that, with the diminution of strength, physical and intellectual, which I experience, I may be allowed a little leisure for study and composition. I trust that this step, to which I have recourse with reluctance, will not be interpreted unkindly.”—*Note addressed by Baron de Humboldt to the Berlin journals.*

CHAPTER II.

WAR.

WE were staying at the picturesque little town of Namur for a few days.* Often we strayed up the grassy heights of those fortifications, which have seen so much warfare, and which so pleasantly recall King William the Third and my Uncle Toby. The conversation naturally took a military turn. Milverton deplored the increase of barracks, armies, camps ; in which lamentation I ventured to coincide thoroughly with him. Mr. Midhurst, as a diplomatist, was rather inclined to discuss the political state of Europe, and to show, if not the just reasons, the causes of this increase of military expenditure. Ellesmere flitted from side to side in the argument ; and, as his way is, tried to embroil it more and more. Entering into details, Milverton gave us an estimate of the expenses

* I see I have made a mistake in the arrangement of these conversations at the very outset, for we certainly were at Namur before we came to the Rhine ; but I did not promise to be precise upon these points.—D.

of the Russian war, which he said, speaking from authority, exceeded 70 millions of pounds.* He then proceeded to show the evil effects of the increase in taxation thus caused, and the extent to which it affected the comfort and well-being of individuals in the different classes of the state. I remember that he accounted for the largeness of expense in the Russian war as occasioned, according to the opinion of an eminent statesman and financier, by the suddenness of the war. At last, after some discussion, Ellesmere thus expressed himself:—

Ellesmere. Do not let us have any of this desultory talk. I see you care about this subject, Milverton. Let us have an essay from you on it. An essay on any subject is not worth much in itself—is likely indeed to be rather a nuisance ; but it gives room for good discussion. It affords extended lines for attack and defence (you see I am quite military in my metaphors) ; and it may give some method to our talk upon the subject.

Milverton. No, no ! No more essays, if you please, from me. I sometimes wish I had never written a single essay. They are such dogmatic things, at any rate in appearance ; and as I grow older I hate dogmatizing more

* It has recently been ascertained, from official sources, that the expenditure for the Russian war, including the Sardinian loan, may be set down as 70,849,859/.

and more. Besides, if you comment upon errors, most people are apt to think that you are free from them yourselves, or that you fancy you are, whereas you seldom write tolerably about anything that you have not suffered from ; and the essays of virtuous and good men, like the histories of happy countries, would be pre-eminently stupid. Now, in the very case before us, I should have to talk down war, and to be very wise about it ; but when an occasion for war arises, I am just as likely to be enthusiastic as any of my fellow-countrymen, and just as likely to be led away by a popular cry. Then one writes about the matter, and seems so wise and forbearing ; being conscious all the time that it is but seeming.

Ellesmere. Yes, I know that you would get up at five o'clock in the morning to see the Guards commence their march, and would cheer them as vociferously as any one of the rest of the mob. But still let us appeal from Philip after dinner to Philip before dinner the next day, and let us have an essay on War ; only do not begin at the beginning, and give us long quotations from Thomas Aquinas to prove that war is in some cases justifiable. We will take that for granted. There is always war, justifiable war, between me and Walter : also between Fixer and all other dogs of his size and courage.

As to what you have said about dogmatizing, I hold that to be frivolous. Large, fluent, unquestioning, unhesitating, unscrupulous dogmatism is one of the grand elements of success in modern life ; as it was in the early days of Greek philosophy, when a philosopher had only to assert, " Fire is the principle of the universe," or, " All is water," or, " Nature abhors a vacuum," or, " Bodies descend

because they have a tendency that way,"—and instantly, after uttering any of these bold sayings, crowds of scholars sought the wise man's door ; cities contended for the honour of being his birthplace ; submissive crowds made way before him ; and in short, to use modern parlance, he "kept his carriage" on a dogma. If you have doubts upon anything that you talk about, you will not even keep a gig.

Dunsford. Now that is what astonishes me—namely, that so many dogmas and dogmatizers having been found out in the course of ages, people should go on dogmatizing just the same, in art, in science, in literature, and in life.

Ellesmere. Allow me to say, sir, as Dr. Johnson would have said, that your last remark shows you to be equally ignorant of men and things. What is the use of philosophers, critics, and prominent persons of all kinds, but to pronounce distinct opinions on all subjects human and divine, and to save the rest of us the trouble of thinking ? In my essay on success in life I shall show that self-assertion is excellent—but all assertion is good. Let us hear no more against dogmatizing. Do not deprive men rashly of one of their chief comforts in life.

But now about this essay that we are to have.

Milverton. You will not have an essay, but since you are so pertinacious, you shall have a solemn talk upon the subject. I will think over what I have to say, make a few notes, and coming to this spot to-morrow, at this hour, I will talk out to you all that I have thought upon the matter.

Ellesmere. Talk is not so good as writing. If I upset

you upon any particular point, you will exclaim, "That is not exactly what I said, or at least what I meant to say," and there will arise a mist of parliamentary explanation, and the force of my arguments will be lost in the mist. But I suppose I must be contented with what I can get, and so we will have this solemn palaver to-morrow.

We did come on the ensuing afternoon, and Milverton commenced his talk in the following manner:—

IT is now eighteen centuries and a half since a new religion was preached to mankind—a religion full of peace and gentleness and mercy. On the day when the Founder of that religion was born, the peace of Europe was maintained by about three hundred thousand soldiers.*

* Milverton seems to have underrated the Roman forces. I have consulted with my learned friend, Mr. W. B. Donne, who gives me the following as his calculation of the state of the military establishment, A.D. 1.

1. Legionaries. Augustus fixed the number of legions at 25. Of each legion the full complement was—

Foot	.	.	6,100
Horse	.	.	726

25 × 6,826 = 170,650

To this sum add a nearly equal

number of Auxiliaries . . . say 160,000

Carried forward . . . 330,650

There are now * about two millions and a half, on the peace establishment. Picture to yourself what

	Brought forward . . .	330,650
2.	Prætorian or household troops, recruited from Latium, Etruria, Umbria, and the old Colonizæ alone, about 5,500 . . .	5,500
	exclusive of Emeriti, or Vexillarii, say 500 } and of the Batavian horse . . . 500 }	1,000
3.	Garrison of Rome (permanent)—	
	4 Cohorts of 1,500 men each . . .	6,000
4.	Semi-military force, "Urbis vigiles," partly police, partly fire-brigade, say 700 . . .	700

Land forces = 343,850

5. Naval Armament—

Ravenna Fleet }
Misenum Fleet } 250 galleys each.

Forum Julii squadron, 125 galleys.

Flotillas in Black Sea.

Flotillas on Euphrates, Rhine, Danube.

Omitting the slaves who rowed or formed the crews, the number of troops employed in the naval armament, including the "*Custodes Pontium et Vadorum*" who were not supplied from the *Castra Stativa*, can hardly have been less than 30,000.

Add to this the contingents furnished by such *Reguli* or independent kings, as Cotys of Thrace, Antiochus of Commagene, and Ariobarzanes of Cappadocia, &c., say 5,000.

Land forces . . .	343,850
Naval forces . . .	30,000
Contingents . . .	5,000

Grand Total . 378,850 men.

£ s. d.

The pay of a Prætorian was . 0 1 5 per diem.

The pay of a Legionary . . 0 0 8½ per diem.

The pay of a Tribunus . . 50 0 0 per annum.

* Written in 1859.

these two millions and a half cost us, the peaceable inhabitants of Europe, in daily pay, in rations, in clothing, and in housing.*

Go through these calculations carefully. Your time can hardly be better spent than in making up such accounts. Remember, too, that these unproductive

* The following approximate statement is taken from the *Almanach de Gotha*, and other sources, which have been carefully consulted. It does not include the marine forces of any state: and at the present moment,† when war is threatened, there are probably 300,000 more men under arms.

Russia	.	.	.	.	.	.	600,000
Austria	.	.	.	.	.	.	380,000
France	.	.	.	.	.	.	366,064
Prussia	.	.	.	.	.	.	161,000
Turkey	.	.	.	.	.	.	143,500
England	.	.	.	.	.	.	140,000
Lesser German States	.	.	.	.	.	.	124,592
Spain	.	.	.	.	.	.	112,000
Naples	.	.	.	.	.	.	92,586
Bavaria	.	.	.	.	.	.	87,682
Belgium	.	.	.	.	.	.	73,718
Switzerland	.	.	.	.	.	.	72,000
Holland	.	.	.	.	.	.	58,495
Sardinia	.	.	.	.	.	.	48,273
Sweden and Norway	.	.	.	.	.	.	42,000
Lesser Italian States	.	.	.	.	.	.	36,979
Principalities	.	.	.	.	.	.	34,144
Hanover	.	.	.	.	.	.	26,938
Portugal	.	.	.	.	.	.	26,849
Saxony	.	.	.	.	.	.	25,396
Denmark	.	.	.	.	.	.	21,000
Greece	.	.	.	.	.	.	9,686
San Marino	.	.	.	.	.	.	27
Total							2,682,929

† 1859.

soldiers might have been productive labourers and artisans, so that you have to add the loss of their labour, to the cost of their keep.

Try to imagine these millions of armed men, defiling, without intermission, in long array before you: the bright, alert, and ready-handed Frenchmen, the stout hardy Prussians, the well-drilled Austrians, the stalwart Danes, the gay Piedmontese, the sturdy Dutchman, the much-enduring long-coated Russians, the free-limbed, haughty, defiant Spaniards, and the cool, resolute, solid-looking Englishmen. Bright summer days would wane away, as this vast armament, with all its baggage and artillery, moved on before your wearied eyes; and all night long the unvaried tramp of men and horses would still be heard resounding. Something like a conception of the numbers may be formed by considering that if every man, woman, and child, to be found in London and its suburbs,* were transformed into a soldier, the number would about represent the effective force of men at arms in Europe. Consider how the most experienced Londoner loses his way sometimes in that great city, and discovers 'districts of which he

* London and its suburbs include all the area from Putney to Woolwich, and from Streatham to Hampstead.

knew nothing before. Let him imagine these new regions, as well as those parts of the town with which he is familiar, to be suddenly peopled with soldiers only. Let him not only traverse the highways, but go into the houses, and see the sick and the aged and the infantine, who seldom come into the streets, and let him persevere in imagining these also to be soldiers, and London one huge camp. He will then have some idea of the extent of European armies, and may reflect upon what it would cost to feed these unproductive millions for a single day.

The first objection that will naturally be taken to any arguments drawn from the above alarming statement, is, that the population of Europe has greatly increased. True: but consider at the same time that there are not now those immense differences in civilization which should invite the movement of large hordes of men in any particular direction. The flourishing cities of the south of Europe have not now to protect themselves against Gauls, Huns, Goths, Visigoths, Allobroges, Belgæ, Quadi, Marcomanni, or other barbarians, who as naturally rushed upon the nearest community that was less uncivilized than themselves, as cold air rushes into a rarefied atmosphere. The Gauls and the Belgæ and the Allobroges have flourishing cities of their own. Except in few

instances, aggression is not attempted now with the thought of permanent occupation—at least in Europe.* We are becoming a little too old and too wise for that.

DOES WAR SUPPORT WAR.

But you will say that the proposed occupation of the conquered territory is but one motive out of the many that have led to wars. This objection is quite just. I will, therefore, now endeavour to dispose of another motive,—namely, the hope of spoil.

There have been a few occasions in the world, and only a few, when this motive, the hope of spoil, has been justified by the result, and when the spoil has paid the expenses of the war. When a barbarian horde of Huns, or Visigoths, or Tartars, hurrying from a land where gold was rare and riches of all kind inaccessible, came down upon a fertile country, paid no expenses as they went along (having never heard

* Neither can I admit that, as regards India, our extension into Oude and the Punjaub are cases in point on the other side. A conquest, once begun, is likely to continue until what may be fairly called the natural limits of the conquest are reached. If all India had remained unconquered until now, the British would not, I imagine, think of commencing conquest there, for the sake of occupation.

of such a thing as a military chest), sacked flourishing cities, and returned to their barbarian homes enriched with spoil of all kinds, there was at least an appearance of success, as far as spoil was concerned. The barbarian, when he displayed to his astonished wife and children cups of gold and dishes of silver, and when he decked out his beloved with precious stones, seemed to have gained something by his foray. I say "seemed," because perhaps it would have been better even for him to have stayed at home and cultivated his land or looked after his cattle.

When again European armies took the rich cities of Mexico and Peru, the spoil was such as might well make spoil a considerable motive for warfare.

It is probable, too, that the expenses of our first war in China were compensated by the Sycee silver we compelled the Chinese to pay us : it is more than probable that the expenses of the French revolutionary armies in Italy, under Buonaparte, were provided for by "contributions" from the Italian states.*

* As an instance of the requisitions made by the French "liberating" army in Italy, I subjoin the following "Conditions of the Armistice concluded between the General-in-Chief of the Army of Italy and Mons. Frederic, Commander of Est, Plenipotentiary of the Duke of Modena.

"The General-in-Chief of the army of Italy grants to the

But, as a general rule, in the present time, when armies have to pay their way, and when money knows so well how to make itself scarce upon the first rumour of its being about to be seized upon by force—in an age when swindling may pay, but robbery cannot—no rational man will contend that the movements of armies are in the least degree likely to be paid for by any spoil which it is allowable for them to take. That motive, therefore, unless there is a return to barbarism, is effectually disposed of.

Duke of Modena an Armistice, in order to give him time to send to Paris for the purpose of obtaining from the Executive Directory a Definite Peace, on the following terms, to which Mons. Frederic, Commander of Est, and Plenipotentiary of Mons. the Duke of Modena, submits, and which he promises to fulfil; viz.

“1st. The Duke of Modena shall pay to the French Republic the sum of 7,500,000 livres, French money, of which three millions shall be immediately deposited in the chest of the Paymaster of the Army; two millions within the space of fifteen days in the hands of Mons. Balbi, Banker of the Republic at Genoa; and two millions five hundred thousand livres in the hands of the same banker at Genoa, within the space of a month.

“2. The Duke of Modena shall furnish 2,500,000 livres in provisions, powder, and other military stores at the choice of the General-in-Chief, who shall likewise fix the periods and places, when and where the provisions shall be furnished.

“3. The Duke of Modena shall deliver up twenty paintings, taken from his gallery or his dominions, to be selected by persons nominated for that purpose.”—*Original Journals of the Eighteen Campaigns of Napoleon Buonaparte*, vol. i. p. 31. London. No date.

WARS OF OPINION.

We come now to wars of opinion. In this respect also the motive is fast dying away from the minds of men. It is not that bigotry is by any means extinct, but that a great many men have discovered that you cannot propagate opinions securely by means of force. Moreover, the world of opinion, in the last century or two, has become divided into so many sections, that it is difficult to array them one against another in battle. When all Europe was distinctly marked off into Protestant and Catholic, you might bring these two great sections face to face in hostile array; but now, when there are so many shades of opinion in religious matters, and, consequently, so many different sections of persons anxious for toleration, and fearful lest the party to which they nominally belong should get the upper hand and oppress them, a thousand hindrances would be found in the way of getting up a great war upon religious opinion. The same argument would apply to any other matter dependent upon opinion.

Then again, from whatever cause, the doctrine of non-interference as regards the domestic concerns of other states has become largely prevalent in modern times.

Ellesmere. Forgive me for interrupting, but what I am anxious to say will never come in so well as at this point of the discourse. You are disposing, Milverton, of various motives for war, but pray do not leave out of your consideration one which may appear ever so absurd, but is nevertheless a most important motive to deal with. Which is the stronger? That is a question pregnant with battle. You have a herd of bulls: they might enjoy their pasture comfortably together; there is plenty of herbage for all, but that important question, which is the strongest or the fiercest, must be settled first. You have a mob of boys: the same question has to be decided. Walter was only the other day telling me that Higgins was the "cock of the school," but that Johnson was very near him, and very ambitious to take his place, and that both Higgins and Johnson avoided tarts, and circumscribed themselves in puddings, in order to keep themselves in good training order. You may laugh, but this abstinence from tarts quite corresponds with the ready acceptance of taxes amongst us grown-up people for the purposes of war. Indeed I do not know but that the abstinence from tarts is not the greater sacrifice of the two. Man nature is the same as boy nature, and I do not see how you will dispose of this motive—the longing to be first of two rivals—as glibly as you have disposed of other motives, which certainly have rather tended to become effete as the world has grown older.

Milverton. Thanks for the interruption, which was well-timed. I had not forgotten the powerful motive which you have so humorously brought before us. Nay further, I admit that there are several motives for war, or

at least for the maintenance of effective military force, which are by no means dead in men's minds. Nations have still many objects which they are anxious to further, if not by force, at least by the show of force, and which objects are really worthy of considerable sacrifices being made to attain them. I now return to my own line of argument.

THE FRAMEWORK FOR WARFARE.

The main question, and that to which the attention of statesmen, financiers, engineers, and other men of scientific skill should be directed, is this. They would say, we detest war: we have no notion of a profitable or justifiable war for the purpose of occupying a conquered territory, of gaining spoil, or of propagating opinion: but we must do something to maintain the sway we have gained, to protect our colonies until they can protect and rule themselves, to preserve commercial independence, to prevent the strong from persecuting the weak, and to cause that the great highway of the sea should be traversed without interruption except of a legitimate kind. For these purposes it is not necessary to be always going to war, but it may be requisite to maintain effectively the means of going to war. We

want always to our hand a something which shall exactly represent the potential force of our nation ; and moreover, it must be a representative which can, at short notice, be turned into the thing it represents. That is the scientific problem before them. As in a good system of currency you use for daily purposes but a small portion of the precious metals, having a representative of them which can at short notice be exchanged for the metals themselves, so the representative of a nation's force should be something which adequately represents it, and which can without much delay be converted into that force. The use of too much gold for daily purposes is simply waste. The use of too many soldiers and of too many stores is also simply waste. And the problem remains, how to maintain potentially the requisite effective force. All this may seem very clear and undeniable, almost entering into the regions of truism ; but I doubt whether, simple as the truth is, it is often clearly recognised by statesmen, and clearly put before legislative assemblies. Mark you, such a problem will not be solved by indiscriminate saving. Expenses would have to be increased in some directions ; though, as I believe, they might be greatly diminished in others ; and I must admit that the problem though easy enough to state, is exceeding difficult

to solve, when you have to apply it to very numerous and very complicated details. Still there it is before us, and an attempt at solution must always be made.

MISERIES OF WAR.

It seems but a trite subject to dwell upon, the miseries of war and conquest ; but really the extent of woe which history discloses is something portentous, and should occasionally be brought back to our minds. A single page which you read coldly and calmly through—a dull one perhaps, hurried over and soon forgotten—often contains the record of an amount of misery which must have touched a hundred thousand hearts, and an amount of destruction which must have called for the labour of a generation of hardworking men in replacement and reconstruction. The more we extend our researches the more we are impressed by the extent and penetrating nature of this misery and destruction. Ofttimes, after following the regular blood-stained tramp of history, Babylonian, Assyrian, Median, Persian,—the wars of those bitter little Greek states—the formation of the Macedonian empire—the dissolution of that empire—the over-

whelming movement of the remorseless Roman, crushing down all nations under his feet—the irruption of countless hordes of barbarians, with their Attilas, and afterwards their Timours and Ghengis Khans—the endless small bickerings, bathed in blood, of counts and dukes, and roitelets, Merovingian, Carlovingian, and Capetian—the grand and foolish and pre-eminently bloodthirsty Crusades—the fierce disputes of pope and emperor and antipope—desolating religious wars, perhaps of thirty years' endurance—the hideous conquest of the New World, and the steady business-like wars of aggression and succession and annexation—the student thinks he knows something about the wreck and ruin which the quarrelsomeness of mankind has produced upon the earth. But then, deviating some day from the usual course of history, he comes upon the records of some corner of the world, which he supposed to have been neglected by the demon of discord, and finds that there, too, there have been immense, continuous, and bloodthirsty wars, and what they call splendid achievements of all kinds; not hitherto much written about, because the names are hard and the provinces obscure, but which have not been neglected from any deficiency of atrocity,—until at last the wearied student begins to think that the surface of the earth,

if rightly analysed, would prove one ensanguined mass of buried ruin.

Now, I ask, has nothing been gained by the study of all these records? It sometimes seems as if there had not, and as if mankind were ready, now as ever, to rush, upon the smallest provocation, into the accustomed track of deliberate carnage and certain desolation.

A more instructive course of reading could hardly be laid down for a student of history than his taking the records of some considerable town, and seeing the evils it had suffered from its foundation to the present day by wars and sieges. A good town to choose would be the most ancient town in Europe—Padua. Let the student see and consider the injuries that Padua has received from the bellicose disposition of the world. It is not taking an extreme case; for there is Padua, visible on the face of the earth, after all that it has suffered: whereas, of how many once flourishing towns may it be said that they now only furnish disputes to rival antiquaries, who do battle about the sites of these towns; which, in their utter destruction, afford a grand field for learned argument—and final doubt.

NATIONAL DEBTS ; THEIR CONSEQUENCES.

If the wars between great countries did but end like a quarrel handsomely fought out between two common men, where there is a great noise, some severe blows given and taken, and a little blood-letting on both sides, with hearty friendship afterwards, these wars, though horrible enough, would still be much less mischievous than they are. But a war combines the evils not only of a fight but of a disastrous law-suit. When the glory is gained or the defeat endured, there is still the reckoning to pay. And what a reckoning ! I know what may be said in favour of National Debts, and what may be urged in mitigation of the evils they cause. But the National Debts of most European States have long passed the limits of any usefulness, (if such a thing there be as useful indebtedness,) and have become onerous burdens, anxiously regarded by all thoughtful people who care for the welfare of their respective countries. What a sum it is that England, for instance, has to provide each year for the interest upon her debt, before she has a penny to spend upon internal administration. Not far from thirty millions of money. Consider how the internal administration is cramped and hindered—

“ By that eternal want of pence
Which vexes public men.”

It is not only that art, science, and literature receive the shabbiest aid from the public ; but I am sure it will be within the cognizance of many persons acquainted with government that even such a small sum as seven or eight hundred pounds might often be most judiciously expended in some public department (perhaps in the way of some experiment), and is not asked for, or is refused, because the Treasury must look narrowly, not to say meanly, to the expenditure of every farthing of the public money.

See, moreover, what an immense advantage is to be gained by the remission of taxes when we can afford to remit them :—how some branch of home manufacture which had been smitten and stunted by taxation, springs up into life * when it is even but partially relieved of its oppressing burden. Consider, too, how public works of the first utility languish for want of funds, and how the Government is seldom able to exercise what foresight it may possess, in making purchases that would be of signal service to the people, especially to the poor. To give but one instance ; what an excellent investment it would be for the public, if Government were able to purchase

* I might refer to the manufactures of glass and stained papers as instances of the great benefit that has arisen from the remission of taxation.

large vacant spots of ground in and about great towns, and to devote these spaces to public purposes: the best purpose, perhaps, being to leave them unbuilt upon. It is, however, but easy work to show the mischief of large National Debts: it is not so easy to make people think of this mischief when they are eager for war, and before the reckoning has come in for them to pay.

But perhaps a still greater evil arising from war than even destruction of life, desolation of territory, and increase of taxation, lies in the general distraction of mind which it occasions throughout society, and the stop which it assuredly puts for a time to human progress. Here are we just beginning to understand something about the most potent elements in the universe, such as heat, light, and electricity; just beginning to investigate the laws of disease among town populations, and the modes of mitigating it; just beginning to enter upon a bold career of scientific husbandry; just beginning to endeavour that the poor should live in a state of less abject squalidity than that in which they have heretofore lived: and all our attention is to be diverted from these great objects to modes of attack and defence, and our minds to be confused by the noise of drums and trumpets. Surely this is a great evil, and never greater than at the present time of hope and promise.

WHO IS BENEFITED BY WAR.*

On the other hand, it will, I know, be contended that war is not all loss.

"Multis utile bellum" is a well-known saying, and there is, unfortunately, some truth in these unpleasant words. But has any one numbered the millions to whom peace is useful? Let us enter into reckonings upon this matter. War may be useful to contractors, armourers, the population of some seaport towns and arsenals, occasionally to certain classes of shipowners and merchants, and generally to those through whose hands the money raised for war passes. But how very small a proportion do these people bear to the great bulk of the population? How insignificant and transient are their interests compared with those of the mass of the people—a mere vanishing quantity, as the mathematician would say. We may also admit that war raises the prices of provisions. Is that a benefit to the many? It is not even a benefit, in the long run, to the producer, whose sure gains are based upon the gradual improvement and permanent well-being of the great masses of the people. That the poorer classes should be able to buy a little more bread, a little more meat, and be able to house and

clothe themselves a little better, is of far more importance to the land-owner, the corn-grower, the manufacturer, and the merchant, than any fitful gains that may be got out of the disordered state of things which war inevitably produces.

But to place the question on much broader grounds. In every country, Great Britain being by no means an exception, an immense amount of reproductive work requires to be done, in addition to that which is already going on. Can anybody contend that it is for the general interest that this reproductive work should be indefinitely deferred, and the most wasteful work that can be imagined, *i.e.*, active warfare, be undertaken in its stead? Men's energies are limited, and the two things, internal improvement and external outlay for war, cannot go on together. Who would not wish to have seen those seventy millions of money lately expended in the Russian war, appropriated instead to reproductive work at home; especially when we find it an exceeding difficulty in our greatest city to obtain three millions for the most urgent public purposes?

I suspect that few people thoroughly believe, or at least realize to themselves, the fact that those seventy millions have been spent in war, and that the Queen's subjects, far and near, are so much the poorer, for

that money having been so laid out, and would have been so much the richer, and more too, if it had been expended in industrial pursuits.*

People read of credits voted, year by year, for millions of money, of issues of Exchequer bills, of certain great financiers attending at the Chancellor of the Exchequer's office, and as they read these important announcements, they almost think that the expenditure is in some mysterious way provided for by words and paper and certain financial jugglery. They do not fully comprehend the fact that so much solid capital has gone from them and their heirs for ever.

* I sent this essay of Milverton's, while it was, in type, to a well-known statesman of long standing in her Majesty's councils, with whom I had become acquainted when at college. The truth is, I was afraid lest Milverton should have been led into exaggeration upon some of the above points. This statesman, however, instead of restraining the argument, carries it further. These are his words in a note upon the above passage :—

“We raised a Parliamentary loan of 8,000,000*l.* for India last year, and a further sum of 12,000,000*l.*, in England and India, will probably be required during the present session. How different would have been the result if these immense sums could have been employed in growing the raw materials for our manufactures in the valley of the Ganges, raising there the wages of the ryot and facilitating the payments of the landed proprietors in India, extending the manufacturing and commercial industry of Lancashire and of the West Riding, thus benefiting simultaneously the Eastern and Western dominions of our Queen.”

Then, again, taxation is a subtle thing, and you have to follow it into all its ramifications before you discover and rightly appreciate the mischief which it does to you and your descendants, when the bulk of the money raised by that taxation has been spent unproductively. To ensure good internal administration, to maintain such a readiness for war as may prevent war, or such as may make war, when it comes suddenly, less expensive—no money judiciously spent can be considered to be wasted. But all beyond that is pure waste ; if not for the few, at least for the great mass of the people, whose interests every statesman is bound to consult first. There is then, I contend, no argument for war to be found in the fact that it may be useful to some private persons, or to some few classes of the community.

Amongst the greatest curses attendant upon European wars, as they affect this country, are foreign loans. We cannot prevent money going where it pleases. It is one of the freest of earthly things. It will not be besieged, or impressed, or severely controlled in any way. Still it is well to note the mischief that occurs from its free movement in any particular direction. Every improving man, every person who is striving to produce more and more out of land, or by manufactures, is to a certain extent stayed and

hindered by these foreign loans. They must make money dearer for him. If this is not a great national evil, it would be difficult to say what is.

When I am asked:—"But what plan do you propose for reducing the military establishments of Europe?" I cannot say that I have any plan, or that I believe that any one else has. But we may gradually induce such a state of feeling and of opinion, as would, almost unobservedly, lead to that reduction. Men, I know, are seldom satisfied with these undefined and distant hopes. The human mind delights in specifics, and is apt to believe that for every evil there is a specific remedy. If something hitherto unknown were found out, there would, they are apt to think, be no more wars. But there is no specific, I fear, to be found out for persuading potentates to disband armies; and there is always the pretext, and often the good excuse, for a potentate, that he cannot disband any portion of his army while a neighbouring potentate maintains his in full force. And who is to begin the good work? Happy indeed would it be for mankind if the work were of a nature that could be left to obscure students to settle. All that they can do is to point out the nature and extent of the evil, and to dwell upon it without exaggerating it; to

illustrate from the rich resources of history the magnitude of the evil; to prophesy disaster from it when they can honestly do so; and to show that its consequences are such as in the long run to promote the destruction, rather than the stability, of empires. If they can sow any of this good seed they must leave it to fructify in the minds of other men of their own time, and in the minds of other men of future generations. For this is not an evil that will be cured in a day.

HINDRANCES TO WAR.

As one way of hindering war, we should not hesitate to put before the masters of mankind the sternest and truest words as regards their responsibilities in this matter.

It is to be doubted whether any powerful and governing person ever thinks—whether any such person has ever thought—with sufficient gravity and just terror of the tremendous responsibility he incurs in beginning or continuing war. Men are not without remorse, without terrible remorse, for their private sins. But how many of these sins are committed in moments of passion, under hideous temptations, from dire pressure of circumstances, when the actors are goaded by fear, anger, envy, want, jealousy, or other

imperative scourges of the human soul. War is mostly a matter of calculation and of judgment. It is not, at least in modern times, a hasty affair. The promoter of war has, in general, plenty of time to reconsider, with all due sobriety, the resolve which he may have made in anger, or in the intoxication of vain-glory. The world is old enough now to have furnished sufficient examples even to the least literate of monarchs, generals, or statesmen, of wars which have terminated with signal success apparently, *i.e.*, as far as the mere war was concerned, but with utter failure as far as the purposes were concerned, for which the war was really undertaken. The coveted territory is not added, or, if added, is found to be a burden rather than a gain; the ally to please whom the war was begun, is alienated, rather than made grateful; the prestige of power and sagacity is damaged rather than augmented; the home government is rendered more difficult rather than less so, now that the war has come to a conclusion. These results do not always happen; but they have happened with sufficient frequency to make the boldest man, if he have any wisdom corresponding with his boldness, pause and ponder before he undertakes an enterprise which all history has pronounced to be so dubious in its issues as war. I put aside the

ugly questions which such a man should ask himself; whether the result, if gained, can compensate for the enormous amount of human suffering which it must demand, and whether he, the main promoter of the war, is in the eyes of God or man justified in incurring the awful hazard of producing calamities of which, in this world, he has often, personally, to endure so small a share. Taking all these things into consideration, it may well, I repeat, be doubted whether any conqueror, or warlike statesman, or military monarch, has ever done his conscientious scruples sufficient justice before he has come to the dread resolve of commencing a war, the burden of which commencement is to be upon his soul for ever. Better be the maimed soldier, the ruined peasant, the bayoneted child, the dishonoured mother,—better endure the whole misery of a disastrous campaign, collected and heaped upon one person, if such a thing could be,—than have the fatal responsibility which lies upon that man who, in wantonness, or selfishness, or even from reckless miscalculation, has been the main promoter of a war that might have been avoided.

I have used advisedly the words “the main promoter of a war,” because, even with powerful, war-

like, and self-willed monarchs, there might be few wars if their councillors were like the vizier of the Persian king, Nushiravan.

The courser of this king had borne him, when hunting, far away from the crowd of his courtiers, and his vizier alone kept up with him, and rode by his side. They came upon a desolate village. Two birds there were conferring together in song, "and their notes were more contracted than the heart of the king."

"What is this twittering?" said the monarch.

"Oh, light of the earth," replied the vizier, "I would tell, if the king would be a learner by it.

"This bird gave in marriage, yesterday, his daughter to that bird, who demands, early in the morning, the bridal fortune: saying, 'This deserted village thou wilt give up to us; and so many besides thou wilt make over to us.'

"The other bird replies, 'Depart from this proposal: see the injustice of Nushiravan; and go; be not anxious. If the king be such, in no long time, for this one desolate village, I will give thee a hundred thousand.'"

The king smote his head with his hand, and wept. "See my tyranny," he exclaimed, "that I make a seat for owls where there should be only tame birds.

“The Creator gave me a kingdom to the intent that I should not do that which can produce no good. I, whose brass they have besmeared with gold [his courtiers’ flattery], am doing those acts which he has not ordered.”

And the monarch’s anguish was so keen, and his loud cries of self-reproach were so warm, “that by his breath the shoes of his horse were softened.”

He rode back to the station of his troops, and his face was not as the face of the king Nushiravan. “The scent of his lenity reached throughout his whole empire.” Thenceforward he diffused justice and trampled on iniquity, and until his last breath he departed not from these good courses.*

But there are few viziers like the vizier of Nushiravan; and the despotic monarch seldom finds one by his side who can interpret the twittering of birds so wisely, and who dares to rebuke with boldness the man who sustains him in power and emolument.

TEMPTATION AFFORDED BY LARGE STANDING ARMIES.

As some excuse for monarchs, we must own that the natural disposition of mankind is to make use of

* See the translation of this fable of the poet Nizami, in Sir Wm. Jones’s *Works*, vol. iv. p. 387. London, 1870.

whatever they possess, whether it be advisable to use it or not. The man who has the gift of eloquence cannot bear an enforced silence, however injurious to himself it may be for him to speak out,

“ Et sua mortifera est facundia.”

The man who has the rare faculty of exquisite expression will write books, though the writing of books is, as some think, the most deplorable occupation, except grinding metals or working in a coal-pit, that has yet been invented by human beings. Something, however, has to be said for this use of certain faculties, as there is generally behind these faculties a force and power which require to be used. Nature seldom makes such incomplete beings as those would be who had a wonderful power of expression, but yet had nothing to express. The danger from an injudicious use of power is much greater when the power is arrived at by accident, and is not by any means innate. Hence the man who has a half a million of soldiers to play with is grievously tempted to use them, whether the use be wise or not. You might nearly as well trust a child with a large whip, and expect him not to slash about with it in a most inconsiderate manner, as to expect a man who has at his command immense armies (perhaps an hereditary

acquisition) not to do something with them, however uncalled-for that something may be. Hence in all states the wholesome dread that there should always be of large standing armies being maintained upon any pretext whatever. This is the great merit of constitutional government, that, with a view to home affairs, it naturally has a wise jealousy of the existence of such armies. Constitutional governments are not much more averse to foreign war than despotic governments are; but fortunately the means for immediate warfare are never so ready to their hands.

It may be noticed that these large standing armies are comparatively a modern invention. When barons and their retainers were summoned by the tenure of feudal service to assist their monarchs in a foolish war, if they chose to go, they went, and pillaged, and devastated; but when they came back, and were disbanded, the country had not to bear the expense of a standing army, and the barons returned to their private affairs, perhaps to carry on feuds with one another (their private business), and the state was not exhausted by maintaining men at arms for the especial purposes of monarchs.

THE INVADING NATION POSSIBLY THE GREATER
SUFFERER.

There is a very curious result of our partial advance in civilization as regards its influence on the effects of war, to which I beg to call your especial attention. It is this : that, comparing modern times with ancient the nation sending out armaments often suffers now proportionately more than the nation which has to bear the war in its own territory. To understand this fully, we must look into details. Follow in imagination the track of an English army commanded by the late Duke of Wellington. It pays its way ; private property is strictly protected, as far at least as the commander-in-chief and his officers can protect it—we all know how the Duke ordered capital punishment on one occasion for a very trifling theft ;—and, in general, the track of that army is not marked by any deep indents of destruction, by any at least which the industry of a year or two may not easily efface. Now, take the other side of the question. The nation that provides and sends out the invading army has become more responsible, less inclined to injure wantonly, and more taxable, as civilization has advanced ; and, since it may cost more to send out forces than to receive the shock of them, the invaders may ultimately

suffer far more than the invaded. To this day I can clearly trace, in the poor habitations around me in the country, the effects of Pitt's war taxes ; and it is not too much to say that many a fever distinctly corresponding with the expensive movements of British armies abroad, is now ravaging our English cottage homes.*

The above may appear far-fetched and over subtle ; but it is not so. The evils of warfare as they tell upon home comfort are disguised, and pass under other names, but they are not on that account the less caused by war ; and it must be admitted that until civilization reaches that point when costly armaments and the maintenance of large standing armies are thoroughly discouraged—are discouraged, indeed, as much as cruelty and needless destruction in carrying on warfare—these disguised evils will continue to bear an increasing disproportion to the more manifest and therefore more controllable miseries of war.

THE MISCHIEF OF AN ARMED PEACE.

After what I have said of the evils of actual warfare, you cannot charge me with underrating them. But I

* The results of the excise duty on bricks, and of the window-tax, will be visible for another century in the ill-constructed and fever-fostering tenements of our lower classes.

really do believe that the mischief, if not the misery, of an armed peace, is more to be apprehended. This sword hanging over us takes somewhat of the savour out of every banquet. A great war ended, there is some chance of disbandment : and for the masses of mankind it is the maintenance of large armies, and not the war itself, that may prove the greatest evil ; causing general depression, augmenting taxation, hindering trade, and circumscribing adventure—moreover perpetrating all this mischief steadily, as a matter of course, that attracts, comparatively, but little notice. There is no end to the increase of armies ; it goes on silently from year to year, and every year valuable materials of all kinds are used up in a way which will soon go out of fashion. We find it difficult enough, in northern climes, to provide warmth for our poor people : think of the coals used for war steamers even in times of peace. In fine, it really becomes a question whether we had better not have a war once in every ten years, which might lead to some considerable disbandment, than a peace full of daily alarms which gives good reason for a constant increase of armies, and a constant addition of expenditure for warlike purposes.

HOW GREAT CHANGES IN OPINION TAKE PLACE.

In what I am going to say now, you may think that I am taking you through devious paths ; but you must believe that they will lead up to an important branch of the subject : as they certainly will do.

How like we are to our fathers !—in the main characteristics of thought, I mean. It is true that much is changed about us physically, but it is not such a change as affects the habits of thinking. Take the rapidity of locomotion, for instance. These days of steam and electricity seem certainly very different from the time when, as boys, we used to be taken, on the first of May, to see the mail coaches turn out from the Post Office in all their new gear, and with all their fine array. And what a pretty sight, by the way, it was ; one, I am sure, which the boy who had once seen it would never forget. But observe, the ideas of men are not the least changed upon the main subject. They saw the advantages of swift locomotion ; they exceedingly desired that swiftness ; and though there may have been some surprise as to the new means adopted for attaining that desired end, there was not the slightest radical change of thought engendered in the matter. The same course of argument might be applied to many other instances.

Painless operations in surgery, which seem to me the greatest invention of modern times, are but a following out of the skilful appliances which had long been brought to bear upon the same end. If we take literature, which is no doubt an admirable reflex of the current thought of men, we shall see how little change there is in the nature of that current. The conversational wit of our day, the best kind of that wit, differs very little from that of Selwyn, or of Jekyll: the best kind of writing, from that of Swift, Addison, Bolingbroke, and Temple. Nay, to go further back, how closely we are related in habits of thought and the ways of looking at anything to the great writers of Elizabeth's time. Bacon's words have occasionally an antique show about them, but the current of thought is for the most part such as we think now, or as we incline to think the moment we have heard it. Further back even, and also in different countries, there is the same similarity to modern thought. Charles the Fifth and his ministers are very like modern statesmen in the essential elements of their ways of thinking. But, as you go back, there does come a time in history when this similarity is considerably broken up and diversified; and I contend that the change does not take place gradually, but, as it were, *per saltum*.

If, for example, you take the beginning of the fifteenth century, this suddenness of change will be visible. I could not illustrate my position better than by bringing such a work as Monstrelet's *Chronicle* before you. That work commences in the year 1400. Now, as you probably will not read Monstrelet, and certainly cannot read him now, I will give you an instance of what I mean. Very early in the *Chronicle* there is an account, amongst others which resemble it, of a general challenge given by the Seneschal of Hainault.*

"To all knights and esquires, gentlemen of name and arms, without reproach, I, Jean de Verchin, Seneschal of Hainault, make known that with the aid of God, of our Lady, of my Lord St. George, and of the lady of my affections, I intend being at Coucy the first Sunday of August next ensuing, unless prevented by lawful and urgent business, ready on the morrow to make trial of the arms hereafter mentioned, in the presence of my most redoubted lord, the Duke of Orleans, who has granted me permission to hold the meeting at the above place.

"From respect to the gentleman [he alludes to the person who may accept the challenge], and to afford him more pleasure for having had the goodness to accept my invitation, I promise to engage him promptly on foot

* I need hardly remark that I have made this quotation myself: Milverton merely gave us a sketch of the passage. [D.]

unless bodily prevented, without either of us taking off any part of the armour which we had worn in our assault on horseback : we may, however, change our visors, and lengthen the plates of our armour according to the number of strokes with the sword and dagger, as may be thought proper, when my companion shall have determined to accomplish my deliverance by all these deeds of arms, provided, however, that the number of strokes may be gone through during the day, at such intermissions as I shall point out.

“Should it happen, after having agreed with a gentleman to perform these deeds of arms, as we are proceeding toward the judge he had fixed upon, that I should meet another gentleman willing to deliver me, who should name a judge nearer my direct road than the first, I would in that case perform my trial in arms with him whose judge was the nearest ; and when I had acquitted myself to him, I would then return to accomplish my engagement with the first, unless prevented by any bodily infirmity.

“That all gentlemen who may incline to deliver me from my vow may know the road I propose to follow, I inform them, that under the will of God, I mean to travel through France to Bordeaux,—thence to the country of Foix, to the kingdoms of Navarre and Castile, to the shrine of my Lord St. James at Compostella. On my return, if it please God, I will pass through the kingdom of Portugal,—thence to Valencia, Arragon, Catalonia,

and Avignon, and recross the kingdom of France, having it understood if I may be permitted to travel through all these countries in security, to perform my vow, excepting the kingdom of France, and the county of Hainault." *

Here is a total change of thought. Nobody nowadays has the slightest idea of gathering renown in the way which the Seneschal of Hainault proposed for himself. And to this love of duelling for duelling's sake what a contrast is afforded by modern notions on the same subject, when duelling, even for a good cause, is universally stigmatized, at least amongst us, as something foolish as well as wrong.

But perhaps a still more striking instance of the change in the ways of thinking, which I fancy I recognize, is to be found in reading the celebrated defence (also chronicled in Monstrelet) made by Master Jean Petit on behalf of the Duke of Burgundy for the acknowledged murder of the Duke of Orleans. The transparent sophistry, the wonderful pedantry, the astonishing audacity with which the orator brings in St. Paul's exhortation to charity, in order to countenance one of the foulest assassinations that ever was committed, make you feel, when you are reading this defence, that you have entered into

* MONSTRELET, chap. viii.

a different period of thought from that which characterizes your own times. Also, when you consider the immense barbarities which were committed in those times during the long and bloody wars between the French factions of Burgundy and Armagnac, and during the contests of the French and English in the same period, you must admit that there has been since then a great change of thought and feeling in the mode of warfare.

But, alas ! if you come to that which presses most deeply upon the resources, the comforts, and the well-being of a people—namely, the maintenance of numerous armies in time of peace, you will find very little change of thought or practice. All that change has yet to be introduced. It is no doubt a much more difficult thing to persuade potentates to reduce the number of their armies, than to cause them to become more and more humane in the actual proceedings and practices of warfare. It is easy to perceive the mischief of indiscriminate slaughter : it is not at first sight easy to perceive the full mischief of maintaining larger armies than a country's needs demand, or than its resources will bear. But we may fairly hope that such knowledge will come—perhaps come suddenly rather than gradually, and an ameliora-

tion take place in this respect which would astonish those persons who in these days maintain the necessity for upholding large armies, as much as it would astonish the seneschals, dukes, counts and vidames of Monstrelet's time to find the small amount of intentional barbarity with which war is conducted in our times. In such a great subject as we are considering, where the roots of evil lie so deeply both in human nature and in the present tangled circumstances of Europe, we must have recourse to history to gain admonition and comfort, and to see that in the long course of years changes of thought arise, if not gradually, at least, as I have said, *per saltum*, which would seem to any one generation absolutely Utopian, if not impossible.

RESTRAINTS UPON WARLIKE TENDENCIES.

In estimating the chances of any restraint being put upon the tendencies to war which still exist in Europe, we must consider how the individual man who may wish to resist these tendencies is placed, and what contrast his position affords to that of a man, similarly minded, who lived in former ages. I am afraid that the contrast will not be so much in favour

of the modern man of peace as might have been anticipated. The well-known lines—

“ But war’s a game which, were their subjects wise,
Kings would not play at,”

are more plausible than true. Consider the difficulties under which the cause of peacefulness labours, in so far as it is to be promoted by private persons.

As civilization advances, the division of labour becomes more and more exact and well-defined. Each man has enough to do in pursuing his calling or profession. All that happens in the world is, or at least seems to be, of trifling import to him, in comparison with his failure, or success, in that calling or profession. He has become part of a great machine, over the main movements of which he has scarcely any direct control. The accomplished surgeon, as well versed perhaps as any man in the miseries and sufferings in war, hears of warlike intentions on the part of his government, or of some foreign power, regrets exceedingly to hear of such intentions, but can only give a few of his spare thoughts to the subject, and next to no action to avert the evil, for his profession is one that mostly demands the whole energies of the man. The merchant hears “on ’Change” of wars and rumours of wars, and to few men is war more odious than to

the merchant ; but these wars bring to him an increase of anxious thought and of necessity for prudent action in his own immediate affairs. He is, therefore, more than ever absorbed in them ; and, taking society generally, though, as the years proceed, there is less disposition to be warlike in the individual man, and less capability from the division of labour of his being so, there is also less control over war than when each man wore a sword, knew how to use it, and had in some measure the beginnings and the issues of wars in his own hands. In ancient times it was almost impossible for kings to maintain a war which was unpopular with their barons, or even amongst the retainers of those barons.

So far the modern state of things is unfavourable to a restraint being put upon the warlike tendencies of monarchs. The absence of any great controlling power in the Church is also unfavourable. We must not forget that the Church did on many occasions interfere to prevent war, and that we owe to her influence the existence of that remarkable law in the Middle Ages, called "The Truce of God,"* by which warfare was forbidden during three days of the week.

* "As the authority of the civil magistrate was found ineffectual to remedy this evil, the Church interposed. . . . A general

On the other hand, there are some influences in modern times which give peculiar powers for restraint being put upon war. Men are better able to communicate their opinions to one another, and to create, with considerable rapidity (for that is the main point) a great change in public opinion. Public opinion also is more potent, and reaches even to thrones with singular facility.

Again, there is a much greater power of combination than there ever was before, not only amongst people of the same race and country, but throughout the whole civilized world. It is not impossible that great leagues and associations may yet be formed amongst the principal peoples in the world, having

reconciliation took place ; and a resolution was formed, that no man should in future attack or molest his adversaries during the seasons appropriated for the celebration of the great festivals of the Church, or from the end of Thursday in each week to the beginning of Monday in the week ensuing : the three intervening days being considered as particularly holy, Christ's passion having happened on one of those days, and His resurrection on another. This cessation from hostilities was called ' The Truce of God ; ' and three complete days, in every week, allowed such a considerable space for the passions of the antagonists to cool, and for the people to enjoy a respite from the calamities of war, as well as to take measures for their own security, that, if the ' Truce of God ' had been strictly observed, it would have gone far towards putting an end to private wars."—RUSSELL'S *History of Modern Europe*, vol. i. p. 380. London, 1818.

for their object to put a restraint upon the intolerable burdens and miseries of needless wars.

Upon the whole, though the process of time has not made everything favourable to the lovers of peace, and though, on the contrary, it has introduced some additional difficulties in stemming the tide of war, it has yet created new and extraordinary powers which may be brought to bear upon the warlike tendencies of monarchs or of nations, and which may ultimately prevail. At any rate there is no ground for abject discouragement in the matter.

Perhaps the greatest advance that has been made in public opinion of a kind to hinder warfare, is the general opinion in England against going to war with such of our colonies as may be reluctant to continue in association with us, and which are able to shift for themselves. If our feelings were expressed in words, the following would, I imagine, be what we should say: "We are proud to have sent you forth; we are willing to defend you and to fight for you (we should never desert a colony that held by us); but we decline to fight with you, if you are determined to sever yourselves from us, and have attained sufficient growth to do so."

Such, I believe, to be, in the main, the opinion of England with regard to her colonies. It were to be

wished that other nations took a similar view of their dependencies, when those dependencies had proved themselves, for a considerable period of time, unwilling to be ruled by the Imperial State which they have been assigned to. If other nations did think so, we should not now * be trembling on the verge of a war that is to settle whether a large part of reluctant Italy is to be governed by a Germanic power, which, even if it succeeds in maintaining its sway over a thoroughly alien race, will only do so by the maintenance of such armies as must be a distress to its other subjects, and an injury to the civilized world—as all large standing armies are.

I do not maintain that the above is a case at all analogous to that of England and her colonies, but it presents a difficulty which would be solved by a still further advance of public opinion in a direction adverse to war.

In reply to what I have just urged about the force of opinion, you may say that it does not easily reach a despot's mind. Not easily perhaps, until the opinion becomes pretty general. But if there were a public opinion about war, at all corresponding with

* 1859.

the opinion of those persons whom I am now addressing; do you think it would have no weight with warlike monarchs? If a monarch knew, for instance, that there were a great many persons who thought he was doing a very childish and silly thing in going to war, and who had a sincere contempt for him because he wasted the resources of his subjects in warlike preparations, do you think that these opinions would have no influence upon him? Why, Haman could not bear the existence of one man, Mordecai, who sat at the king's gate, and did not do honour to Haman. For a man to despise public opinion he must be an extraordinary man, if not a great one—quite great enough to come to the conclusion from his own thinking, and without the influence of others, that needless war is a most sorry employment of his own faculties, and of his kingdom's resources. Once form the requisite public opinion: there is little to be doubted about its potency.

PROSPECT OF INVASION.

In speaking of the subject of war, it is natural to think especially of one's own country, and, in doing so, to consider that apprehension of invasion which periodically besets the English. It is surely right that

they should sometimes entertain, and very gravely entertain, this apprehension. But it need not become a bugbear? Let me ask what great nation has not been invaded? Were not the Greeks invaded by the Persians, the Romans by the Carthaginians, the Swiss by the Burgundians? and with what result in each case history declares. There would be much calamity—there might (I firmly believe there would) result great honour from our being invaded; there certainly would be no shame in the mere fact of an invasion; and the fear of such an event ought not to lead to any needless outlay of money which, to use a good expression of Lord Sydenham's much ridiculed at the time, had better "fructify in the pockets of the people." As to making England, or any other county, impregnable, it is simply impossible in these times; and the same judgment and moderation which it is admitted should be shown in maintaining the means for attack, must not be overstepped in preparing the means for defence.* In estimating the chances, it is surely at least nine to one, that the next war that England will have to undertake will be to protect some weak power rather than to defend herself.

* It may be doubted whether Pitt's Martello towers have proved of any advantage adequate to the expense bestowed upon them.

There is another consideration which much alarms even the most thoughtful men, and those who are least likely to give way to any rash alarm ; and that is, the belief that England is unkindly regarded by most foreign states, and that they would be glad to see her humbled. There is something in this notion ; but not nearly so much, I suspect, as most of the alarmists are inclined to suppose. When it comes to the serious question of whether England is to decline into a second-rate power, most of the kindred nations will be ready to drop any small jealousies. They will ask themselves :—"What have we suffered from the predominance of this great power : what injury has she really done us ?" It seems to me that they could not give any answer which would warrant them in regarding her difficulties with any but the gravest apprehension for themselves.

We have our little quarrels, sometimes rather bitter and disagreeable, with our brethren on the other side of the Atlantic ; but I am persuaded that the good and true men in America would never be so traitorous to their race, and to the traditions of its freedom, as to join wittingly, and for any long period, in any attempt to pull down England from the position she has so long held amidst European nations.

WHAT CHANGES HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN OPINION.

In commenting upon the great changes which take place in opinion during long periods of time, and from which alone we are to hope for such a change of opinion in Europe as would discourage the maintenance of unnecessary military force, I cannot help noticing the changes which have taken place in equally great matters. Go back to the times, not so very far distant, in which torture was really believed to be a means of getting at truth—an idea almost inconceivable in our day. Consider again the belief in witchcraft. Perhaps the most potent weapon that Philip the Fair and his atrocious band of lawyers had against Pope Boniface, and against the Order of Knights Templars, was the ready accusation of magic. Against Boniface it was deposed that he had been seen practising strange magical rites of a sacrificial character.* Against the Templars it was

* “ Besides all this, there were what in those days would perhaps be heard with still deeper horror—magical rites and dealings with the powers of darkness. Many witnesses had heard that Benedetto Gaetani, that Pope Boniface, had a ring, in which he kept an evil spirit. Brother Berard of Soriano had seen from a window the Cardinal Gaetani, in a garden below, draw a magic circle, and immolate a cock over a fire in an earthen pot. The blood and flame mingled ; a thick smoke

deposed that they worshipped a magic head that looked both ways—accusations which, however absurd, could be readily supported by the infallible means of torture. Let us now make a stride from the time of Philip the Fair to that when Lord Mansfield adorned the chief seat of English justice. What did that great magistrate say, when some poor woman was arraigned before him for magic arts, and especially accused of walking through the air? “*My opinion is, that this good woman be suffered to return home, and whether she shall do this, walking on the ground or riding through the air, must be left entirely to her own pleasure, for there is nothing contrary to the laws of England in either.*”

The author of the *Spanish Conquest in America* has said, what a great history the history of a great cause

arose. The Cardinal sat reading spells from a book, and conjuring up the devils. He then heard a terrible noise and wild voices, ‘Give us our share.’ Gaetani took up the cock, and threw it over the wall—‘Take your share.’ The Cardinal then left the garden, and shut himself up alone in his most secret chamber, where throughout the night he was heard in deep and earnest conversation, and a voice, the same voice, was heard to answer. This witness deposed likewise to having seen Gaetani worshipping an idol in which dwelt an evil spirit. This idol was given to him by the famous magician, Theodore of Bologna, and was worshipped as his God.”—MILMAN, *Hist. of Latin Christianity*, vol. v. p. 374.

would be. He might, however, have imagined a much greater history—the rise, the flourishing, and the fall of a remarkable opinion ; such, for instance, as the belief in the possibility of witchcraft, or in the utility of torture. It would be seen how such an opinion arises of necessity in barbarism ; is afterwards fed and supported by a barbarous kind of learning ; how science, “ falsely so called,” fosters it ; how it rises to power and becomes intertwined with great institutions ; what hideous cruelties it commits when arrived at the plenitude of its development ; how the common sense and common humanity of mankind, secretly and almost without owning it to themselves, begin to rebel against it ; how tenderly nurtured enthusiasts (for a tender nurture makes a loving heart) here and there write and speak and act against the evil opinion, and end by becoming martyrs to it ; how scientific discoveries and great works of thought silently protest against it, and these cannot be put to the torture, and cannot be put in prison, and cannot be made martyrs of ; and how at last science, humanity, and good sense, either with or without a revolution, rise up together against the evil opinion, cast it off, and put it behind them for ever. The whole world opens its eyes fully, looks at the dead thing, and wonders that it has ever been

dominated by such a miserable Sejanus, which is now contemptuously borne along amidst the curses of a dis-enslaved population.

During the last few sentences Milverton had been walking up and down and firing his volleys of words into us in rather a warm manner.

Ellesmere. Pray sit down, my good fellow, and do not be so excited. It does not pay, as we used to say at College. We are not an indignation meeting.

Milverton (sitting down). Well, it is foolish ; but most people, I suppose, have some particular subject upon which they are liable to go off into a tempest,—and with me legal persecution is that subject. I can understand, and not be irrationally intolerant of, any brutality in fair fighting, any brutality in, or after, conquest ; any unscrupulousness of ambition which egotistically sweeps away all obstacles before it ; but when you come to a court of law, there, if nowhere else in the world, one does expect something like moderation and rationality. You can have no idea of the horrors of that persecution of the Knights Templars unless you have studied the subject in some such pages as those of Dean Milman's *Latin Christianity*. By the way, have you ever seen the signatures of a man before and after torture. The former clear and bold : the latter a quivering mass of illegibility. Those lawyers of Philip the Fair are an abomination to me.

Ellesmere. Yes, we were not a good set in that time ; nor a very good set in Charles the Second's time. My predecessor Sir William Scroggs was not a highly principled character. I wonder whether I should have been as bad. I suppose I should : rascality is catching.

But now that you are calm again, Milverton, you may proceed, and I will not interrupt you further.

MILVERTON. Before concluding, I must protest against its being supposed that I think we should be niggardly in the management of our military establishments. If we are to have a new barrack, let it be thoroughly well contrived and well built. Every good soldier is such a valuable production that we can hardly be too careful of him. It is waste upon waste to have a large army, and because it is large, to be careless about the means of maintaining it in the highest state of health, strength, skill, and general efficiency. A similar remark requires to be made as to stores, fortifications, and all the muniments and apparatus of warfare. And perhaps there is a still more important consideration to be kept in mind by a state which depends, for the recruiting of its armies, upon the voluntary system,—namely, *that it should so behave towards its soldiers and sailors in all questions arising out of enlistment, disbandment, gratuities, pensions, and the like, that its justice, not*

to say its liberality, should never be doubted. A belief throughout the humbler classes that the government is considerate or even generous in such matters is actually worth a large sum of money, and is almost equal in times of peace to an additional armament : at least it will enable you to dispense with that armament for a time. What credit is to the financier in the power of raising money swiftly and upon easy terms, this good report of the nation's generosity is to the government in the power of raising rapidly, upon an emergency, large armies, and, what is still more difficult without that good report, of manning rapidly large fleets.

UNAVOIDABLE WARS.

It is most unfair to represent as advocates of a creeping or unjust peacefulness those who, anxiously foreseeing many of the evil consequences of war, are strenuous in producing facts and arguments that tend to dissuade from it. A gift is not the less a gift because the giver knows full well the value of what he is giving : and the people who go to war without reluctance do not prove their valour or their magnanimity by so doing. We all know that there are occasions when, as on the threat of foreign invasion,

a nation gathers itself up in all its strength, when selfish aims are thrown aside, when ordinary life is felt to be tame, and buying and selling are not much thought of, when even great griefs, that are but private, fall lightly on us, and when the bonds of society are knit together so closely, that the whole nation produces and presents its full power of resistance. Then it is that the ambitious man forgets his ambition, the covetous man, if possible, his money; the civic crown with its glorious motto, "*ob cives servatos*," becomes the chief desire of all brave men, and tender mothers feel like the Spartan matron of old, who, as she adjusted the buckler on her young warrior's arm, could exclaim, "Come back, either with it, or upon it."

And still a nobler occasion is that when, without one thought of self-aggrandisement, one aspiration after mere glory, or any of the pride of strength, a nation quietly resolves that it is its duty for the interests of the world, or for the defence of the oppressed, to come out to battle; and it does come out sternly and sadly.

But these are rare occasions; and the men and other resources of a great country are not to be played away in paltry vain wars arising from stupid complications, which diplomacy ought to settle, or

indeed in any contests that are not grounded upon dire necessity or absolute duty.

If statesmen are heedlessly inclined to imperil that national strength which they are especially bound to preserve intact if they can, we must bid them think of their own poor people at home, of their daily wants and privations already much aggravated by previous wars, many of which cannot be justified ; and we may venture to remind these statesmen that in the long catalogue of human crimes there is none more deadly to others than giving provocation to a war, which might, by just forbearance, have been avoided.

Happily, however, it is not our own statesmen who need the most, or who, perhaps, need at all, to have such admonitions addressed to them.

Ellesmere. This essay, or rather this speech which you have just given us, is all very well, Milverton, but does it not greatly consist of what the first Napoleon would have called "ideology"? How are you to dissuade warlike nations, or despotic sovereigns, from playing largely at soldiers?

Milverton. Of course we cannot hope at a bound to reform the world in this respect, but we may try to do something towards this reform, if only by stating the facts of the case clearly.

For instance, I venture to ask the simple question, whether there is any dynasty on earth that is worth maintaining at the cost of keeping up an army of five hundred thousand soldiers. I pause for a reply.

Ellesmere. You may pause.

Mr. Midhurst. Is not the whole social system worth keeping up at this price? You are going a great deal too fast.

Milverton. That is the regular argument, or rather the regular bugbear, that is brought up to justify every kind of maladministration. If a social system has in it any strength, worth, or vitality, it does not require huge standing armies to maintain it. I admit that in most of the European nations there are dangerous classes, dangerous because uncared for and uneducated; but surely there is no state in Europe in which an army of one hundred thousand soldiers could not keep down the dangerous classes, if the bulk of the people were reasonably well affected to the government.

Ellesmere. You disposed too lightly by far of one of the chief motives to war—namely, the desire to occupy a territory.

Milverton. At least I am sure that motive has faded away in the minds of individuals; though, for mere political purposes, it may still be an inducement to monarchs.

Let us imagine ourselves in the olden times. I am a small vavasour living where I do now in Hampshire. There comes to me a great neighbouring baron. We will say, Lord Palmerston, who lives at no great distance, and he says to me :—"Friend Milverton of Worth-Ashton, I

have a noble enterprize for thee. Collect thy hinds together, and prepare them for battle. Henry, thy bailiff, will train them as warriors should be trained, and John, thy herdsman, will teach them to shoot with the bow. I see there are stately yew-trees hereabouts. Valiant Sir John of Bedford will join his bands with mine. We go to dispossess the Saracen. There we will give thee broad lands and wide domains instead of these few petty acres not worth looking after. Thou art not a stalwart man thyself; but I have observed that thou canst give thy enemy a shrewd poke under the ribs when occasion offers, and that thou hast the wisdom to wait for the occasion. Valiant Sir John of Bedford is not lofty in stature, but he can give a shrewd blow to his enemies on all occasions.

“We take the blessing of the Church with us, for that has been promised to me by my good neighbour the Abbot of Romsey, on condition that we despoil Benjamin the Jew of Buckinghamshire of all his goods, and bestow a tenth upon the Abbey. We will not fail to despoil him of his goods : that thou mayest reckon upon. The Abbot is a good man, and careth not for trifles such as hymns and processions and images” (the word low-church would not have been invented then).

And I, Leonard Milverton, should be asinine enough to go; and when we had dispossessed the Saracens, valiant Sir John of Bedford and the Baron of Broadlands would quarrel over the spoil. I should take one side or the other, and be ruined in their wars; or they would agree, and as I have always been an outspeaking man, I should be arraigned by both of them for contumacy. Anyway I should soon be dispossessed of my lands.

But that is not the chief point. During the time that I possessed these lands taken from the Saracen, I should probably find out that I was no whit happier than I had been in Hampshire ; that nuisances followed one everywhere, that I had become accustomed to home nuisances, but that I had to acquire the peculiar power of endurance necessary to bear the Saracen nuisances.

Now imagine the Baron of Broadlands coming and making the same proposition to me at this time of the world, and what answer should I make but the following : —“ Baron of Broadlands, thou art a bold, shrewd, and stalwart man. I would not dissuade thee from any good work. Go thou with valiant Sir John of Bedford, and despoil the Jew of Buckinghamshire. Thou hast my blessing as well as that of the Abbot of Romsey ; but I go not. When I was younger, I served under Murray of Albemarle, and bore his red pennon through many beauteous lands, but none saw I that I liked better than my own. Thou talkest of the Saracens, and I call to mind the beautiful town of Seville. And the place is fair, is passing fair ; but when thou hast dispossessed the Saracens, there remain the mosquitoes. Go thou, therefore, with Sir John of Bedford, and when thou hast conquered and dispossessed the Saracens, if thou abide there for ten years, and sendest word to me that the lands of the Saracens is better than the manor of Broadlands, then will I come too. But now I am not minded to part from my swine.”

Of course he never would send for me ; for, as I told you, aggression is not now undertaken with a view of occupation. Then why this idiotic maintenance of huge armies ?

Ellesmere. Ah, why indeed !

An odd idea has often struck me about an invasion of the French. Of course by some accident or other they might some day land a large body of troops in England. They would then proceed perhaps to occupy some large town. Sunday would come. Imagine fifty thousand of the lower classes of Frenchmen contemplating an English Sunday. They are pleasant, handy little fellows, those French common soldiers. They would commune with one another, and would say :—" If we were to conquer this country our rulers would make us occupy it. This English Sunday would then decimate our ranks by *ennui*." The next morning would see them in full retreat to the coast. Meanwhile the English of the great town would discover what handy little dogs the Frenchmen were, what cooks, what pleasant cheery fellows, and they would run after them, imploring them to stay. The worst blows would be exchanged while the French were endeavouring to get away from their hospitable entertainers. Ever after, when rattling their dominoes in their sunny *cafés*, these invading Frenchmen would tell their companions of the awful Sunday they had spent in England. " A good people, a kind people, those English," they would say, " but so dull, and such bad cooks, and no sun there. We will march with our Emperor anywhere but to England." By the way, whether it shone or not, they would swear there was no sun, for all foreigners believe we live for the most part in a fog ; and a good sound prejudice is not to be contradicted by mere eyesight and observation ; is it, Dunsford ? You know your parish pretty well.

Milverton. Ellesmere's idea is a humorous one—I

think we have heard it before from him ; but if the fifty thousand Frenchmen do come, not many of them will return, to tell about our English Sunday or anything else. But to resume the argument about the folly of conquest for the sake of occupation. I have taken an individual case ; but the argument may be fully maintained when applied to tribes and nations. Why, I ask, should the Allobroges desert their splendid Lyons to possess themselves of any other city : or why should the Pannonians quit their pleasant Vienna to occupy any other metropolis in Europe ? Or why should the Belgæ rush away from gay Brussels and that charming park of theirs to distant and nugatory conquests ? Or why should the Quadi and the Marcomanni flee from imperial Prague to occupy any other spot upon the earth ?

To come nearer home, if my neighbours of flourishing Southampton were to invite me to any scheme of conquest with a view to occupation, I should without hesitation thus reply : " Brother Wessexians, for an excursion—a peaceful excursion, on a fine summer's day, with little or no roughness of sea (that last condition is indispensable), as far as the not distant island of Vectis,—I am your man ; but why should we quit our pleasant and thriving abode for untried regions ? Did not Canute, properly called Knut, when he conquered us, read us a lesson rebuking all absurd presumption ? No : let us continue to elect public-spirited Mr. — for Mayor : let us improve the market-place (that really wants improving) ; let us increase and embellish our public gardens ; but let us budge not from where we are."

I hate, as you know, to press any argument beyond

what it will bear ; and I must confess there is one town, the inhabitants of which might make a claim for foreign conquest which I should find it more difficult to resist. That town is Mancunium, more commonly known by the name of Manchester. But the Mancunians are of all men the most disposed to peace. Their name has become a bye-word because they are said to require peace at any price. If the Mancunians are satisfied, for Heaven's sake do not let us put it into their heads that they could gain anything by change. I dare say they are wise in wishing to stay where they are ; and it becomes a case of *à fortiori* when applied to any other city on the face of the earth.

Ellesmere. I will admit that individuals are wiser than they were in these matters ; but what are called political complications are as numerous and as vexatious as ever. I can only repeat my question as to what should be the remedy—putting aside that which may arise from the gradual change in public opinion on war.

Milverton. Ellesmere asks me, what way there is out of all this difficulty, what out-look there is in any direction that should give any ground for hoping that this century will witness any diminution in the number of soldier maintained throughout Europe ? In such cases I can only look for the coming of a great man to power, who, appreciating the just thoughts of the most thoughtful men of his age, and longing to spare his subjects, boldly commences a career of gradual disbandment. Such a man as King Leopold of Belgium I believe to have greatness enough in him to commence such a career, if he had been called to the head of any of the more powerful

monarchies of Europe. You see what he has practically said to his people:—"I am ready to work for you and with you ; but if, upon due deliberation, you do not wish to have me for your king, I will go away from you."

Mr. Midhurst. There are few Leopolds of Belgium.

Milverton. Well, I am no courtier. What can any king or queen do for me ? They cannot make my trees grow. But I think that our own monarch would not wish to occupy a throne where the dynasty was only to be supported by irrationally large armies, breaking down the public wealth.

Common people think that kings and queens have such a very happy, unworking life. Our Guelphs, whatever faults or demerits may be imputed to some of them, have, in the majority of instances, been exceedingly punctual and laborious persons in matters of business. I know this, that when I was a youth in a public office, however long, weighty, and elaborate a dispatch was sent down to the king from the office, back used to come, almost always by return of post, a reply to the head of the department : and certainly the present occupant of the throne has rather exceeded than fallen short of her best predecessors in punctuality and dispatch of business. Now such sovereigns might fairly say,—“We endeavour to do our duty in a very difficult position, and if you will not let us do it without an unreasonable sacrifice on your part by keeping up armies which afflict you, and are a burden on our conscience, you must find some other person to do the work.”

Ellesmere. There are, no doubt, some monarchs who might accept and act upon these rational views ; but, my

dear fellow, what are you to do with a man who thinks he has a mission for conquest, or rules over a nation of that spirit? There will always, as far as I can see, be such men and such nations. At any rate, there will always be men in great power and high place who love despotism.

Milverton. You will say it is but a vain imagination, but if one could imagine one's self the good genius, or the sage, who in a dream, as Eastern stories run, is permitted to stand by the bedside of a monarch, and to give him for once in his life wise and disinterested advice, one would say, "Sir : this fighting other kings' subjects, or depressing the life and energy of your own, is but a small endeavour, and, moreover, a very trite one. There is nothing new to be done in that way now. It would be something comparatively new to try and make your subjects comfortable ; and, considering the perennial difficulties of human life, it would be about the hardest task you could encounter. But if benevolence is not your characteristic, and you must have that empty thing called fame, take at least an unusual route to obtain a singular renown. Nature lies before you, a country into which few private men or monarchs have made successful incursions. Take Ptolemy Philadelphus * for your pattern ; and see whether regal or

* I have since thought whether Milverton chose a good example or not, in naming Ptolemy Philadelphus, as that king certainly maintained huge armies and large fleets. But he seems to have used them chiefly for protection, and his reign is not signalized by any great war. In fostering science and learning he perhaps occupies the first place amongst monarchs. Indeed these Ptolemies were a great race. What a fine saying that is of Ptolemy Soter, especially for his time—"That it was better to make rich than to be rich."—[D.]

imperial resources can avail to compel Nature to give up one more of her great secrets. In Astronomy, for instance, we have been satisfied for nearly two hundred years with a law which is perhaps but a corollary of a much wider law, that a further questioning of matter might discover.

“Our knowledge of all around us, from the hyssop that grows upon the wall to the remote *nebulæ* which are yet unresolved by human science, is but twilight knowledge. Let the ambition of your reign be to increase, in however small degree, the domains of learning and of science.*

“In this bewildering, puzzled, insecure, and blundering world, I will not pretend to you that anything is signally worth doing ; but at any rate there is one thing which it is worth while *not* to do, and that is, to destroy your fellow-creatures, and their poor habitations, by fire and sword. That is neither a novel, wise, nor ingenious proceeding ; whereas discovery in art or science, if it does

* A correspondent writes to me :—“There are peaceful victories to be won at less than the cost of one day’s warfare. Geology offers great conquests, astronomy grand exploits ; and some of the scientific problems which demand solution are hardly to be solved without imperial means and resources. If I wanted to indicate one of such problems I would ask—Is our knowledge of even the figure of our own planet at all satisfactory? We are told that ‘the northern and southern hemispheres are dissimilar.’ What is the case if we divide the globe by any imaginary line into eastern and western? Take the hemisphere which extends from 90° East long. to 90° West, what experiments for ascertaining the real figure of the earth have been made—what establishments for the furtherance of astronomical science exist in that half of the globe?”

not render men less miserable, is at least an employment which is not stamped with obvious absurdity and mischief."

Ellesmere. After this discourse the monarch would awake, would tell his courtiers that he had suffered from a particularly foolish and unpleasant dream, would call for the muster-rolls of his armies, and, like the elder Napoleon, declare that no girl could read a love-story with more intense interest than that with which he perused these interesting documents.

Mr. Midhurst. The new Emperor of Russia seems to be undertaking great things not in the least connected with conquest. This serf emancipation is perhaps the largest and the most difficult transaction at present going on in the world. The Czar seems quite in earnest, too, if we may judge by his speeches.*

* The following are extracts from the speeches to which Mr. Midhurst alluded :—" 'I am always happy at being able to thank the nobility' (this was at Moscow); . . . 'to my regret, I cannot this day thank you. You may remember,' he said, 'two years ago in this hall I spoke to you of the necessity of proceeding, sooner or later, to the reform of those laws which regulate servitude—a reform that must come from above that it may not come from below. My words have been ill understood. . . . I have fixed for you the bases of reform, and I never will swerve from them.'

"The address at Nijni-Novgorod is a mixture of caress and scolding, that indicates the existence of two opposing and nearly equal parties in that government. 'I rejoice in expressing my personal gratitude for the patriotism of the nobility of Nijni-Novgorod. . . . I thank you for being the first to respond to my call in that weighty affair of the amelioration in the position

Milverton. Yes: the Emperor of Russia seems to be entering upon an excellent and an original career. Heaven grant that he may have the force of mind to persevere in it: for there are always huge difficulties in the way of a reforming monarch, and plenty of people about him to say, on critical occasions, "The old way, Sire, was the best, and certainly the safest for you."

But to speak of despotism generally. I must say, I cannot understand an ambition which is limited to the present life, which says to itself, "pleasant pastures and wavy crops of corn, and beautiful cities, and noble highways, and rivers kept within their bounds,—all flourishing in my time, and mostly created by me:—and after me the deluge." So, too, it is but a small thing for a prince or other governor to govern men rigidly, even with great present advantage to themselves, during the short span

of the peasantry. . . . It belongs to you to balance public with private interests in this weighty affair. But I hear with regret of a spirit of selfishness having sprung up among you. Selfishness is the destruction of all things. It is a pity such should be the case. Away with your egotism! I trust in you. I trust there will be no more of these selfish views. . . . Gentlemen, act well for yourselves, and not badly for others. . . . I trust you.' In Kostroma, which he calls the home of his family, the Emperor is very gracious. 'The reception you gave me yesterday deeply affected my heart. I thank you for your willingness to meet my views as to the amelioration in the position of the peasantry. This question—a question all important for the future development of Russia—I bear upon my heart. . . . I hope you will settle the affair with the Divine assistance, and without injury either to yourselves or the peasantry.'—*The British Quarterly Review*, January 1859.

of any man's power, compared with what it would be to leave them, when his life should end, more governable and more assuredly self-governed.

Mr. Midhurst. I can hardly express to you how much I delight in the views you have just expressed, and how entirely I coincide with them. I have been a man in authority—early in authority :—and if ever there was a man who was by nature superlatively fond of governing, and not merely of governing but of managing minutely, and reforming, I am that unfortunate individual. I never look into anything, but I see some part of it which might, to my fancy, be improved and made to work better. Such a nature is prone to be very meddlesome, and to keep all people who are in any way under its sway as much in leading-strings as possible. But what little intellect and powers of observation I have, tended to keep this meddling disposition in order ; and I always said to myself, “What is the good, comparatively speaking, of my getting work well done, if I am always to be by, to see it done, and to have a hand in it? I want to have my underlings grow up equal or superior to myself, and that will never be the case if I teach them in such a manner only as to keep them always in a slavish mental dependency.”

Milverton. I can return the compliment, and say how much I agree with you. In my little way I have had a great deal of work to direct, and I have always aimed at three things in this direction : first, to teach those under me to do the work with all the aids, handiness, and adroitness that experience gives the older or the more practised man ; then, if I could, to put into their minds the

germinating idea of the work. This seems a rather over-fine phrase, but there is such a thing as a leading and germinating idea in most kinds of work that is worth doing at all. Lastly, I have sought to impress them with a sense of responsibility about the work. These three objects accomplished, I leave the workmen alone for the most part. It has happened to me sometimes, and I dare say it has often happened to you, Mr. Midhurst, to find that these people, whom one has endeavoured to train, have come and said, "You never go through our work now, whereas you used to be so particular about every step: I wish you would examine more carefully what we have now done."—"Thank you," I have replied, "but I have done with teaching and training. You know enough to walk by yourselves, and only want self-confidence. And I only want to see results, and to examine them."

Ellesmere. I quite approve of all you have been saying, but I wish to take you both down a peg or two in your own estimation of yourselves. Though you are both very hard-working men, you are at the same time indolent and not inclined to do a bit more work than is necessary. (I know at least that such is the case with Milverton, and I conjecture it is so with Mr. Midhurst.)

But I should like to bring forward another point. Any stranger who had come in during the last few minutes, would have supposed, Milverton, that you were a man who abhorred over-much government; and yet, occasionally, you claim an action for government in matters where it seldom enters now, or only just sufficiently

to dip its feet delicately and produce a muddiness in the water.

Milverton. Now, my dear friend——

Ellesmere. Don't be cross, Milverton. Whenever a man begins with "my dear friend," pronounced in a somewhat querulous tone, something savage and especially unfriendly is coming.

Milverton. Well, my dear plague, have I not explained at least one hundred times in your presence, that I never want to introduce government action except when individual action is impossible, or at least utterly inadequate? Have I not often quoted the man in Aristophanes who wished to make a separate peace with a hostile nation for himself and his family? We see the absurdity of that; but we do not see that there are many things in social life which it would be just as absurd for an individual to attempt. You cannot by your own exertions secure unadulterated food, and it is not worth doing to have the streets swept and watered only before your own doors.

How I wish that Mr. John Stuart Mill, or some other accurate definer and divider, would point out and classify, in somewhat minute detail, what things may be left to individual action in a community and what things must be left to government to do, if they are to be done at all.

Ellesmere. I wish the government would undertake to provide men in armour to bat at cricket, for the present practice of flinging the ball at you with catapultic force, which Master Walter has adopted, has been the cause of my receiving such a blow this morning that I

am rather stupefied, and am unable to maintain my part adequately in this discussion.

Milverton. That is the way, Mr. Midhurst, that Ellesmere gets off—by the aid of a joke and a sneer—when he is beaten ; but I think we have said enough to fortify our position, and that he will not in a hurry attack us again on these points.

We have rather wandered away from our original subject, and before the conversation ends, I must enumerate the points which I have dwelt upon in what Ellesmere calls my “speech” to you—that armies irrationally large are maintained in Europe—that the people are greatly overburdened with taxes in order to support those armies—that it would be well that we men of Europe should, from time to time, ask the reason for the maintenance of these armies, and that those amongst us who possess any power of thought and expression should endeavour to guide public opinion into a wise state with regard to the maintenance of those armies, having a belief in the ultimate effect of that opinion, and a hope that individuals in great station may perceive what are now the highest forms of ambition for them—viz., not conquest for extension of empire, for glory, or for the triumph of any one set of opinions, but domestic improvement in their own states, and the gradual development of freedom throughout their dominions.*

* The reader must have noticed how little part I [Dunsford] mostly take in these conversations. The truth is, I am such an unready person, that my thoughts come too late. I suppose this arises from my having lived so much out of the world. I think

I know as much as Ellesmere or Milverton, but they seem not only to have all their wits about them but all their knowledge, whereas mine has to be excavated.

I mentioned the above as an excuse for subjoining one or two remarks upon war which occurred to me while we were walking home. They were chiefly reminiscences from one of Granville Sharp's *Essays*. He quotes a passage from Howard, the Philanthropist, in which that good man, writing from Moscow, says, "No less than 70,000 *recruits* for the army and navy have died in the Russian hospitals during a single year."

Sharp then notices the fact that despotism destroys its millions silently; while sedition is noisy and tumultuous, and is always dreaded and detested.

"There are few riots," he adds, "without some grievance." "Jupiter," says Lucian, "seldom has recourse to his thunder but when he is in the wrong;" and at the close of a long military life, Monsieur de Vendôme owned that, "in the eternal disputes between the mules and the muleteers, the mules were generally in the right."

How well this would have come in at that point of the conversation where Milverton asked, as I thought most pertinently, whether there is any dynasty on earth that is worth maintaining at the cost of keeping up an army of 500,000 soldiers?

I think I could have added greatly to Milverton's catalogue of the miseries that have been occasioned by war. He did not even touch upon the ravages of the Northmen, or of the Ottomans, or of the great native princes of India.

I should like also to have quoted some passages from the celebrated 29th bulletin of Napoleon, issued during his Russian campaign, such as the following:—

"The cold, which began on the 7th, suddenly increased; and on the 14th, 15th, and 16th, the thermometer was sixteen and eighteen degrees below the freezing point.

"The roads were covered with ice; the cavalry, artillery, and baggage horses perished every night, not only by hundreds, but by thousands, particularly the German and French horses.

"In a few days more than 30,000 horses perished; our cavalry

were on foot ; our artillery and our baggage were without conveyance. It was necessary to abandon and destroy a good part of our cannon, ammunition, and provisions.

“This army, so fine on the 6th, was very different on the 14th,—almost without cavalry, without artillery, and without transports.

“This difficulty, joined to a cold which suddenly came on, rendered our situation miserable. Those men whom nature had not sufficiently steeled to be above all the chances of fate and fortune, appeared shaken, lost their gaiety, their good humour, and dreamed but of misfortunes and catastrophes ; those whom she had created superior to everything, preserved their gaiety and their ordinary manners, and saw fresh glory in the different difficulties to be surmounted.”—*Original Journals of the Eighteen Campaigns of Napoleon Buonaparte*, vol. ii. p. 320. London. No date.

Nothing is said in this remarkable bulletin about the loss of men ; the full truth is told about the *horses* ; but that is quite enough information for any intelligent person.—[D.]

CHAPTER III.

A LOVE STORY.

"OH Love unconquered in fight," as the Greek poet says, who would have thought that I should have to meddle any more with your affairs ! I could not, however, see all these young people running into peril without attempting to guide or save them. It is evident to me that Ellesmere loves Mildred, but I do not think he will ever disclose his love. I doubt whether she loves him, and I suspect that her affections are, or have been, set upon another. I am uncomfortable, too, about Blanche, and it will be a terrible thing if, as sometimes happens, the two sisters should love the same man.

Having these thoughts in my mind, I resolved to have a walk with Mildred, and to see whether I could come to some explanation with her. Both of the girls are very loving to me, and often call me their uncle, though I am no relative whatever of theirs.

Accordingly, I managed to walk alone with Mildred

amidst those unguarded orchards which are to be found for miles together by the side of this beautiful river Rhine. I am the most stupid man in the world in any matter of a diplomatic kind, and though I had prepared six or eight different ways of bringing about the subject naturally, none of them would come to hand when I wanted them. I was obliged to begin abruptly, with no other introduction than that of having previously admired a beautiful plum-tree. The transition was a bold one, but what is to be done when a man has no skill in the delicate diplomacy of conversation. I sighed and said :—

“What a thing love is, and what a pity it is that all the qualities which might help a woman or a man in any other affair in life, seem to have no influence in this, the greatest ; where wisdom, forethought, and resolve appear to have no room for any action whatever.” “Then you too, dear uncle, have not altogether escaped this madness,” Mildred exclaimed. “What a happy woman she would have been, the woman that you loved ! except that she would have had too much of her own way, and we women like to battle a little, or manœuvre, for our influence.” A bright thought struck me, which, in my previous cogitations, had never come into my mind,—that I would tell her my own story, never hitherto told to any one, and that I should thus be able tacitly to moralize on hers. Yes, my dear, I replied, I have been in love,

and indeed I am so still. You may smile, Mildred, but such is the truth ; and as it may do you some good to hear my story, I will tell it.

“ Her name was Alice.”

“ Ah, the same as my mother’s.”

Yes it was, and we were brought up together. She was fourteen when I was seventeen, and I loved her more year after year, as the years went on, almost without knowing what love is. I went to college. Now you will be surprised to learn that I was not naturally a student. Passionately fond of music, doating upon poetry, I made my own little sonnets in those days, as we boys all did, and was a devoted lover of nature and of art, but not at all a student. I cannot imagine any youth to whom it could have been a greater suffering to immure himself in study than it was to me. But I did it. I found out that I loved Alice, that the only chance of winning her was to obtain what is called some success in life, and I resolved to succeed. Always reverence a scholar, my dear,—if not for the scholarship, at least for the suffering and the self-denial which have been endured to gain the scholar’s proficiency. Fond as, I have told you, I was of music, I laid it aside during my college life, and never once permitted myself to go to a musical party. As for poetry, I carefully kept away from it, as if it were some evil thing. The slight recreation of looking at newspapers and reviews I permitted to myself ; and well can I remember the stern restraint I exercised on meeting by chance with extracts from modern poetical works, which I would not allow myself to read until the day after I had taken my degree.

I can see that you often pity Milverton for his unremitting labour. Now I should be the last man to depreciate the labours of any friend, still less of Milverton, but they cannot be compared with those of a very weary, solitary scholar. In the one case the stimulus is immediate : the result comes quickly. An article is prepared, a speech delivered, a report drawn up, a book written ; and there is immediate action on the world, or there seems to be. Opposition only serves to increase ardour, and success or failure alike promote new endeavours. Not so with the solitary student. His aims are far off and the results to him—— But no more of this.

My only pleasure was in correspondence with your——, with my Alice ; and our letters, though of the tamest description, in which there was more talk of conic sections than of love, were an inexpressible comfort to me.

I succeeded. I became nearly the first man of my year in both of the great subjects of examination. I might now come home with some hope at least of having made a beginning of fortune.

I dare say, my dear, you would like to know what Alice was like. No love story is complete without such a description of the heroine. Well, there is a picture in Paris, at the palace of the Luxembourg, called *Les illusions perdues*. A noble figure of a man, in the prime of life, or rather beyond the prime of life, when the leaf is just beginning to turn yellow at the edges, is sitting on a marble quay. His head bends forward, his arms fall down, in utter dejection. It is sunset. A barque is putting off from the quay ; and the barque is crowded

with gay minstrels, happy children, and bright-eyed damsels—

“Youth at the prow and Pleasure at the helm.”

Nobody regards him—the dejected man. Nor does he look at them. He has just glanced at them. They are not, however, in his thoughts; but they have brought back, in long array, what Tennyson calls

“Portions and parcels of the dreadful past.”

It is to my mind one of the most affecting pictures I have ever seen. But that is not its peculiar merit in my eyes. One of the girls in the centre of the boat, who is leaning her head upon her hand and looking upwards, is the image of what my Alice was.

The chief thing I had to look forward to in this journey we are making was, that we might return by way of Paris and that I might see that picture again. You must contrive that we do return that way. Ellesmere will do anything to please you, and Milverton is always perfectly indifferent as to where he goes, so that he is not asked to see works of art, or to accompany a party of sight-seers to a cathedral. We will go and see this picture together once; and once I must see it alone.

I returned home from college, as I said, and found Alice as loving as ever. We walked together and we talked together, and she was never tired of questioning me about my struggles, the rivals I had overcome, and the pleasures I had resisted; but I had not the courage to tell her that it was for her dear sake I had fought the battle.

Presently there came to our quiet house a young soldier. His christian name was Henry. "Why, that was my father's," Mildred exclaimed. He was a nephew of Alice's father, and the two cousins walked together, and rode together, for Alice had to show Henry the beautiful country where we lived. I had not been on horseback for many years, and did not like to show my awkwardness as a beginner in the presence of her whom I loved. It was a very pleasant time. I began to love Henry as a brother, and the more so from the contrast of our two characters. He was a frank, bold, fearless, careless, gay young man. One day he went over to see some old companions who were quartered in the neighbouring town. Alice and I were alone again, and we walked out together in the evening. We spoke of my future hopes and prospects. I remembered that I was emboldened to press her arm. She returned the pressure, and for a moment there never was, perhaps, a happier man. Had I known more of love, I should have known that this evident return of affection was anything but a good sign ; "and," continued she, in the unconnected manner that you women sometimes speak, "I am so glad that you love dear Henry. Oh, if we could but come and live near you when you get a curacy, how happy we should all be." This short sentence was sufficient. There was no need of more explanation. I knew all that had happened, and felt as if I no longer trod upon the firm earth, for it seemed a quicksand under me.

The agony of that dull evening, the misery of that long night ! I have sometimes thought that unsuccessful love is almost too great a burden to be put upon such a poor

creature as man. But He knows best ; and it must have been intended, for it is so common.

The next day I remember I borrowed Henry's horse, and rode madly about, bounding through woods (I who had long forgotten to ride) and galloping over open downs. If the animal had not been wiser and more sane than I was, we should have been dashed to pieces many times. And so by sheer exhaustion of body I deadened the misery of my mind, and looked upon their happy state with a kind of stupefaction. In a few days I found a pretext for quitting my home, and I never saw your mother again ; for it was your mother, Mildred, and you are not like her, but like your father, and still I love you. But the great wound has never been healed. It is a foolish thing, perhaps, that any man should so doat upon a woman that he should never afterwards care for any other, but so it has been with me ; and you cannot wonder that a sort of terror should come over me when I see anybody in love, and when I think that his or her love is not likely to be returned. And now, Mildred, I come to what was the purpose of my telling you this story,—to express to you my hope that you are not in my plight, and to ask you frankly, whether you are not in danger of loving Milverton?

Mildred. Not now : not in any danger. I will tell you what saved me. I had for a long time been struggling against the feelings that were besetting my heart in favour of my cousin, not only from the natural pride of women, but also for the sake of another who perhaps even then loved him much better, and would be less able to control her love. You can easily divine whom I mean. Indeed I see you have already divined it.

You recollect the serious illness that my cousin Milverton had last year. You remember how anxious we were all about him. He was attended by the great doctor A——. We were not living in the house with my cousin, but used to leave him the last thing at night, and come again the first thing in the morning.

Upon arriving at the house early one morning I found, both from the report of the nurse and of his servant, that he had passed a worse night than usual, and that some symptoms of a dangerous character were aggravated. Words cannot tell the anxiety with which I waited the arrival of Dr. A——. At last the doctor came. Dr. A——, besides being one of the most eminent physicians of the day, is a great scholar, and a great practical chemist. In this last-mentioned capacity he was especially welcome to my cousin, who was then deeply engaged in some researches which needed the aid of chemistry. Long and frequent used to be the discussions between himself and the doctor upon certain vexed points.

I sat on the stairs, waiting in direful suspense for the doctor to come out. A quarter of an hour passed, half an hour, three quarters of an hour. I augured the worst from the long visit of the doctor. At last he came out of the sick man's room with a happy expression on his countenance, though a very thoughtful one. I rushed up two or three steps to meet him. "It is good news," I exclaimed. "I think we shall do it, I really do think we shall do it," he replied. "It will be one of the most useful discoveries of modern times, and will immortalize us both. But you girls do not care for these things." "But your patient?" I said rather peevishly,—“Is he better? Is it

a crisis that has passed? Do you know that he was very ill all last night, and that they thought of sending for you?" A sudden expression of dismay came over the old man's face, and he absolutely blushed. "Good heavens, I did not think of asking him how he was; I never was so ashamed of myself in my life. We began talking of this confounded invention of ours. I told him what I had done, he told me what he had thought, and——but I must go back into the room," and away hurried the doctor back into the patient's room.

I took up my station again on the stairs. This time it was not with a radiant face that the doctor re-appeared, but with an unmistakeable air of vexation and mortification on his countenance. "I have been very remiss," he said. "Get this made up directly, and I will be back again in a few hours." In the course of the day my cousin grew worse, and the crisis of the disorder really did come on in twenty-four hours' time. It ended, however, as you know most favourably, and he was cured.

And so was I; for I thought to myself, here is a man not at all indifferent to pain, but on the contrary, exquisitely sensitive to it, as most men of his kind are, and yet so absorbed is he in his plans and projects that he can forget to take even the most ordinary care of himself. Such a man will never love any woman deeply, at least as I should like to be loved. With a more devoted person, like my sister Blanche, for instance, it might be otherwise.

Dunsford. I really think you came to a most harsh and unjustifiable conclusion, my dear; but I am glad you came to it. Forgive me for saying so, but you never could have loved, Mildred.

Mildred. Perhaps so. Indeed I am not sure that there is not too much sympathy between my cousin and myself for love. The sympathy between us is still intense ; and I would forego almost any earthly pleasure to further his purposes, when I am under the full influence of his quiet enthusiasm for them. I would willingly remain unmarried to be of any use or comfort to him, but I could not be married to him. And now, father Confessor, I have finished my confession to you.

We walked home silently amidst the mellow orchards glowing ruddily in the rays of the setting sun.

CHAPTER IV.

CRITICISM.

I ALMOST begin to believe the common saying, that any woman may marry any man she pleases ; that is, provided she sees him frequently, and that he knows that she does love him.

After my conversation with Mildred, I made up my mind to tell Milverton what I had perceived about Blanche with regard to himself. He was at first greatly distressed and vexed. "Pray don't say so," he exclaimed : "surely you are only jesting ; but then," he added, "you are not the man to jest about these things." Then he took comfort in declaring that I could know nothing about such matters as love. (How little our nearest and dearest friends know about us !) How should I know anything ? I really had got into the fanciful ways of some of the old maids of my parish. Milverton was never so rude to me in his life before : but the conversation ended by his protesting that if I were right, the thing must be put a

stop to—that the idea of a young and beautiful girl throwing her affections away upon a faded widower, like himself, was absurd. Was she not admired by so and so, and so and so, dashing young guardsmen, who were fitted for her ; and there was that young Hartley, who owned half the county, why could not he take a fancy to her and she to him—an excellent young fellow who was always coming to consult him about model-cottages. How obtuse in such matters we all are ! I had long seen that Hartley came for a model-wife, and with that purpose was endeavouring to win all possible favour with Milverton ; and I had also seen that Blanche steadily avoided Mr. Hartley. His last words to me were, “ I will prove to you that your ideas in this matter are as absurd as Miss Crump’s (the arch-gossip in our village) were on a certain occasion about yourself ; ” and then he quoted a bit from *Philip Van Artevelde*:—

“ The world, when men and women meet,
Is rich in sage remark, nor stints to strew
With roses and with myrtle fields of death.”

To which I replied, “ But after all the world was right, for Philip Van Artevelde did love Elena.”

By and by, however, as the days wore on, I could not help noticing that Milverton’s investigations, whatever was the nature of them, did not seem to lead to

“a stop being put to it.” On the contrary, he began to be more attentive to her ; asked her opinion upon matters which she could not possibly understand ; and one day, after returning from a long walk with her which I hoped would lead to something decisive, he told us that Blanche had a great deal more in her than most people supposed, and that she was becoming an excellent companion. Mildred and I secretly wondered how Blanche contrived to put in the yeses and the noes in the right places ; for we were sure she did not venture further out of her depth than an occasional affirmative or negative : but still she was, no doubt, a very agreeable companion.

We continued our wanderings, without there being much on my part to chronicle. One conversation, however, I took notes of. It was at that unrivalled town, Nuremberg—the only town, perhaps, in Europe where there is a thorough harmony in the buildings, and where even the modern parts seem to have grown up in reverent resemblance to the ancient, as if lath and plaster and composition, dominant enough elsewhere, were things unknown to the Nurembergers. We were all sitting on a height, just above Albert Dürer’s house, near the fortress, whence you can see the wide expanse of surrounding country.

We talked of Albert Dürer and his tiresome wife,

and of works of art, and of the criticisms upon them, until we found ourselves in a discussion on criticism generally. Milverton made some remarks which I could not remember at the time, but which he afterwards, at my request, furnished me with in writing.



COMPARATIVELY easy would be the work of criticising, and comparatively small the mischief done by injudicious critics, if it were finished works alone that were chiefly subjected to criticism. There are some few things in life that appear to be complete, and so far fit for criticism, such as a picture, a book, a statue, a form of government, or an action of which you know all the actors (how rare, by the way, this is!), and the times, places, and circumstances of the action.

But the greater part of what is brought before you in the course of the day is incomplete and continuous. You cannot get round it, you cannot look at it as a whole, or weigh it in its completeness. Take any continuous transaction at some point of its continuity,—and what do you know about it? It requires the highest calculi of the mathematician to discover from a small portion of a curve submitted to him the law

and the nature of the curve. Mr. Babbage's calculating machine, after grinding out numbers which apparently proceed according to a certain order, suddenly produces a number, or numbers, of another order, though there is no change in the machine, or in the setting of it.

The above instances are connected with inanimate matter : the difficulty is complicated beyond measure when life enters into it. A piece of spider filament gives you but a small idea of the web which is to follow ; and the insect *larva* yields but a slight indication, and that only to the scientific mind, of the perfected *imago* which is eventually to break into being.

Again, and carrying the argument further, when you rise from insects up to men and attempt to criticise their proceedings, you must remember that the doer is not always good at explanation. Even when he can explain, perhaps he has no time to do so ; and besides, when he can explain and has time, he may be prevented from explaining by discretion, by reserve, or by the impossibility of telling all the story. I have always thought that the most foolish men would have a great deal to say in behalf of their folly, if they could tell us all of it. Be that as it may, at any rate we must beware of criticising the half-effaced, the con-

tinuous, the incomplete, as if it were a rounded and visible whole. The most inane of critics have some dim idea of this when they go into an artist's studio, and make remarks upon unfinished works. Even they cannot help saying, "But perhaps this thing, which I object to, will have a different appearance when you have finished the picture." Now, it is not often we are admitted to see a picture so unfinished as the character of any great man remains in history; or indeed, as unfinished as the character of any living man should appear to us, considering the rough and careless way in which we mostly come to conclusions upon it.

That part of criticism which consists of comments upon the conduct of others, is where critics and commentators are most likely to be utterly deceived. You do not want much converse with a man to be able to judge pretty fairly about his behaviour. A man of fine manners is discerned at once to be a man of fine manners. You do not want to hear a man tell more than two or three anecdotes in order to decide whether he is a good narrator. One touch of humorousness betrays "a fellow of infinite humour." A bore seldom ceases to be a bore in any half-hour's conversation. Sitting but once with a man in a com-

mittee, or on a council, may enable you to discover whether he is a just person or not. But when you come to decide upon a man's conduct, there is often some little circumstance or other, which, if once known to you, would change the whole current of your thought about him, and cause you to start back with horror at the rash judgments you have been pronouncing upon him. You suppose him to be mean, and he is very poor,—a poverty caused by undiscovered generosity. A case of that kind came to my knowledge only three weeks ago. A friend of mine came to me, and, with penitence, confessed to me how he had misjudged another friend, whom he had been condemning in conversations with me for years. "I have long ridiculed that man," he said, "for his extreme parsimony, and I now find that he is penniless, having made the most generous efforts to save another friend from ruin." One such instance as that—and a man of much worldly experience could probably tell us of dozens—should make us cautious of pronouncing any judgment that we are not obliged to pronounce upon men's conduct. It is a curious thing, but if you had asked me, as regards the instance I have just quoted, whether the man unjustly condemned by his friend was a generous person or not, I should have said at once that he was, as he had a

generous look, and a generous manner : but there was no standing up against the instances brought forward of a ludicrous and unkind parsimony on his part. Yet, note the real and lofty generosity in never explaining why he could not subscribe to this or to that. Depend upon it we are mostly doing a long-sighted as well as a kind thing when we decline to pronounce upon other men's conduct, and when we endeavour to reserve our judgment, let appearances be ever so greatly against them.

In discussing criticism, I think that there is one circumstance for which there is hardly ever sufficient allowance made on behalf of the thing or the person criticised. The comments are made at leisure, after due deliberation, without much pressure of responsibility, upon things which were done in a hurry, at a moment of fatigue, amidst the pressure of other business, and when a resolve of some kind had to be taken at the instant. Consider, for instance, the office of a minister of State. There are, perhaps, thirty or forty letters to be written by the minister, conveying determination of some importance, in the course of a single day. The same pressure occurs in a merchant's business, or in the daily labour of any professional man. One out of many hundreds

of such transactions comes to light, perhaps in an unfavourable manner; and those who choose to comment upon it, do so at their leisure, with plenty of deliberation, and often with some knowledge of what has been the result of the transaction they criticise. They are apt to forget that the person criticised was placed in very different circumstances from themselves; and it requires a great exercise of their imagination to throw themselves into his position before they begin to comment.

Mr. Emerson, I think, has observed how mean, trivial, and ludicrous the details of most lawsuits appear when they are brought into the full light of discussion in open court. A similar remark may be made as regards all transactions that come within the glare of extreme publicity. Human affairs are not conducted in such a way as to bear this publicity. And if it were to be general, men would feel like bees working in a glass hive (only the bees have no newspapers, nor are subject to any comment which they can understand); and, indeed, a more alarming simile might be adopted, for the casual transactions of even unimportant men are sometimes exposed to a magnifying power like that of the solar microscope, which can make a small insect appear a hideous monster.

It is for the above reasons, and for others like them, that the press should be very careful to restrict itself within due limits in commenting upon transactions of a thoroughly private character. Otherwise great cruelty may be heedlessly committed. Some unfortunate individual, from hurry, thoughtlessness, or over-softness of disposition, confides in a very foolish manner, and is egregiously imposed upon. It may be fair that some punishment should come for this, but not such a punishment as being commented upon, and held up to ridicule before the eyes of hundreds of thousands of readers, as happens if the transaction is made the subject of a leading article in a leading journal. Surely, that censorship of the press, which is, perhaps, the only censorship possible in our time and country, the censorship of discretion and kindness in a really able editor, should be exercised on such an occasion; and, at the risk of omitting an amusing article now and then, an editor should severely confine his writers to commenting upon what is justly and fitly public, not that which is accidentally public. Of course the slightest exercise of Christianity would induce an editor to think how little he would like himself, if he had committed some small blunder or indiscretion, or even some crime, to have it magnified and lectured about in the manner

in which a bee's wing is exhibited by the aid of the solar microscope before referred to, and all its minutiae commented upon by a fluent, popular lecturer. We do not find, moreover, that severe critics, when their turn comes to have their shadow set dancing on the white sheet in the lecture-room, have attained that extreme indifference to concentrated solar light and scientific commenting, which should make them unable to imagine what are the sensations of other men when exhibited to the staring public in this remorseless fashion.

There is another consideration which, if kept well in mind, would infuse a higher tone into criticism, than, I think, it has ever had, and which would assuredly inspire it with some generosity. It is this: that, for the most part, there can be no reply. You criticise the dead—"the silent ones," as they have well been called,—what need I say more on their part? You criticise the absent; and, unless the proverbs of the world have much belied the world, the absent find but few defenders. You criticise the lofty and the powerful; and for them to reply would certainly be a lowering of themselves, and a task which they can seldom undertake. The soot-bearer jostles against the wearer of the silken gown: the

wearer of the silken gown cannot retaliate in kind. An eminent person is always at the mercy of the scurrilous. Again, you criticise the busy ; and, as I said before, they have no time to answer you. You criticise those who are involved with others in long and difficult transactions, and they cannot reply without the consent of those others, or without revealing what they ought not to reveal. They must bear whatever blows you are pleased to inflict upon them. You criticise the great man, or the great work, and it is not in the nature of him, or it, to furnish any answer to you. It stands out as a stern fact, as a lighthouse on a stormy coast, and must endure the buffets of the waves without any attempt at retaliation.

In making these remarks upon criticism one can have no fear of unreasonably diminishing it. There will always be enough criticism in a refined and civilized world. What a great part it does perform is known to all men. What a still greater it might perform is appreciated by those who would have it blended with knowledge, governed by self-restraint, and enlightened by charity. Every day its functions become more ample, because in this varied world there are so many subjects which not even the highest

and most laborious intellect can know anything about from direct information, and as regards which it must be content to gain its opinions from others who are supposed to be peculiarly instructed. It is especially to be noticed, that in giving summaries of works, or transactions, lies the most pregnant and most important part of criticism; and this work, which is in fact historical writing, will be admitted by every one who has tried to accomplish it, to require a great amount of skill, impartiality, and judgment. The critic who brings these qualities to bear upon the ordinary transactions of life—the daily critic in a newspaper, for instance—is a large benefactor of mankind, and really saves the world an immensity of trouble. To elevate the function of criticism, to restrain it within due limits, but not to carp at it, or depreciate it, is the object which I have had in addressing these few remarks to the accomplished circle of critics whom I see around me.

All that has been said above of criticism and of comment applies with still more force to meddling, which is often but bad criticism developed into injudicious action.



Ellesmere admitted that criticism was very bad, but maintained that it was good enough in general for the works criticised. From this point I think I can give the conversation pretty accurately.

Milverton. I am thinking more of the critics themselves than of the works of the people they criticise. I suspect that the habit of criticising destroys productive energy in the man who gives himself up to criticising; and I believe that even a bad motive for criticising is perhaps less injurious to the mental powers than the habit of looking out always, as you read or observe, for what you shall say about it. In the one case a man does a base thing, but not irremediable as regards himself. He says to himself, "I hate this other man, and I will write him down:" but when he gets into the habit of shallow unthinking criticism, he says to himself, "Lo! I know this matter, and all other matters, and I can talk or write wisely about them on the shortest possible notice"—whereas he knows nothing—poor man!

Dunsford. Well, I am always very angry when I see a learned work, which I know must have cost the author years of labour and research, discussed in the most flip-pant manner, perhaps a few days after it has appeared.

Milverton. Yes: it is vexatious, that the worst critics generally speak out first, and forestall the market of opinion. But as is natural with you, Dunsford, when one talks of criticism, your imagination always flies to the criticism on books, which is really a small and unimportant part of criticism. Even the criticisms on public

men and public measures, often unjust enough, Heaven knows, are but a small and insignificant part of criticism, taken generally. It is the daily criticism, household criticism, if I may so call it, that is so important ; and that might, for the most part, be so beneficially abridged. Human motives are so difficult to get at : we know so little about each other, that the endless comment which goes on must be irrelevant. There may be too much even of the most innocent comment ; and I think I have observed that all the higher natures are much averse from commenting upon others' character or conduct, and that this aversion grows stronger as they grow older and wiser.

Ellesmere. You would delight, Milverton, in a story which Lord John Russell has told once or twice in the House of Commons, about the great Condé and Cardinal de Retz. Condé comes in and finds the Cardinal's table covered with pamphlets on both sides, making the vilest accusations against both sides. The Cardinal enters : the Prince points to the pamphlets and says, "These wretches think that we do all that they would do if they were in our places."

Milverton. Well, I want to revert to my first point, namely, the non-productiveness of those who get into the habit of over-criticising ; and for an example, I shall bring you down from cardinals and princes to very humble people. There are two farmers in my neighbourhood. One is an excellent critic, and the other a very good farmer. Farmer Wilkins is the critic, farmer Hodge the good farmer. There was lately a piece of land to be let, or sold, close to me. Wilkins was profound in his

criticisms upon it. "It had always been rated very low in the parish books. He had heard his father say, no man could get a living from it. If it were worth anything why was it to be let or sold now?" He was great in detail. "He had counted twenty-seven docks in one square yard of it. It might be next to a road, but that road led to nowhere." And so he went on. I began to feel a great contempt for this unfortunate bit of land. The next day, I saw farmer Hodge upon it, and I resolved to hear what he had to say. He took up a bit of the earth, and he crumbled it in his hand, and looked about him vaguely, and then he said :—"It be out of heart, sure-ly, but not worse than my bit at Dragmire. I do think I'll take to 'un, and see what can be done." This was three or four years ago. You should see now the rich waving crops that there are ; but farmer Wilkins goes on criticising with his accustomed ability, and almost proves to me, with the crops before my eyes, that the whole thing is a failure. You know great critics never retract their sentences of condemnation.

Ellesmere. These farmers are mythical. In this benign assembly I am always set down as the critic. It is farmer Ellesmere and farmer Milverton that are really spoken of ; and I, for one, shall believe in farmer Milverton's waving crops when I see them, and not one moment before. Besides, if I see the grain crops I shall be incredulous as to turnips ; and turnips are the soul of good husbandry, as people tell me.

Milverton. Well, then, you shall have a story about two old ladies—oh no, not old ladies, but spinsters of a certain age, who live in Dunsford's parish. They are

Miss Strachey and Miss Hartopp. Miss Strachey is the busy, benevolent person of the parish ; and without her I am sure I do not know what the poor would do for soup and flannel and many other little commodities. In this case the doer and the critic are great friends. Miss Hartopp sits in her chair all day long, reads many books, is dimly suspected of knowledge in political economy, but is victimized, like the rest of us, by Miss Strachey. However, the good lady,—I mean the victimized one,—has her pleasure in proving that everything her friend does is wrong, and must lead to bad consequences. “You really should speak to her, Mr. Milverton, and prove to her that this selling of flannel below the cost price is quite out of all principle.”

Accordingly, with the greatest gravity, I call upon Miss Strachey, and prove to her, quoting largely from Adam Smith, Mill, Ricardo, and other authorities, that she is a dangerous woman ; and that I am sent by her particular friend Miss Hartopp, to recall her from the evil tenor of her ways. “Dear heart alive”—that is one of her favourite expressions—“I am sure that if any of these good gentlemen knew our parish as well as I do, they would not be cross with me. Why, what would Betty Saunders have done with her seven children this cold winter without the soup-kitchen and the blanket fund ? but that reminds me I have not got Miss Hartopp’s subscription to the blanket fund. You don’t think I am wrong, do you, Mr. Milverton ? It is only one of your odd ways, coming and talking to me in this fashion. That’s what you gentlemen call being ironical, is it not ?”

Now it does not do to be ironical with ladies, so I said at once, "Rightly understood, these political economists, I dare say, are with you : if not, hang them, and hang the critics too. By the way, don't let me detain you from calling on Miss Hartopp for her subscription. She will be particularly liberal after having delivered her lecture on political economy, as she always is. Good morning."

Ellesmere. I suspect again it is but Miss Matilda Milverton and Miss Tabitha Ellesmere that are the principal persons in the story. I have no doubt that if there be such a person as Miss Hartopp, she is quite in the right, and that Dunsford's parish is demoralized by flannel. But Milverton, like all authors, is manifestly sore on the subject of criticism.

Milverton. Indeed, I am not. I am like Miss Strachey : I go on never minding, and when I am particularly attacked, I exclaim as she does, "Dear heart alive, perhaps the good gentlemen would be with me if they knew our parish as well as I do." And, besides, seriously speaking, I am penetrated with an ever-present sense of the difference of human beings, each from all the rest. I am not surprised, therefore, or shocked when people differ from me, and honestly blame me. I should be very much astonished if they did not. I remember though, once, to have been considerably startled by the effect of some hostile criticism. I cannot tell you what publication it was in, but it represented me as an impostor, a fool, a plagiarist, and a scoundrel. The editor had taken particular care to send it to me, and it came at breakfast time. Now every man who has any observa-

tion knows what a poor and erring creature he is, and he is rather pleased and flattered at seeing that other people have not got hold of the right things to say against him. I was therefore rather tickled and pleased at this abuse than otherwise. I laughed heartily, and tossed the paper over to the girls. I remember Miss Blanche failed to perceive the joke. Women always get into a rage when those they love—I mean when those they have any regard for—are attacked.

Blanche. I wish we had him here !

Ellesmere. If anybody supposes that that is an aspiration of pure benevolence on the part of Miss Blanche, he is mistaken.

Milverton. To continue my story. It was the evening of the same day when I happened to notice Walter reading most intently at the tea-table. He is not here, is he ?

Dunsford. No : he has run off to have a nearer look at the soldiers.

Milverton. I watched the boy for some minutes, noticed his flushed cheek, but thought with pleasure that the power of concentrating his attention is the very thing I long to see in him. It makes the great difference between men's capacities, this power. Still, I said to myself, I must interrupt him. He was then in delicate health. I stole softly behind the boy, smoothed his hair, and looked down on what he was reading, with the intention of asking a question and breaking the thread of his thoughts. It was this stupid review or newspaper that the boy had got hold of ; and he was intently studying the worst part of the abuse that had been

lavished on his father. I don't know how it was ; but somehow or other this shocked me a little. Of course the child would indignantly repel the accusations made against me ; but I thought to myself the bloom of his regard would gradually be rubbed off. The children of the neighbouring squires grow up in profound and undisturbed belief in their fathers——

Ellesmere. Well, I don't know ; I don't think Master Walter's faith in you is shaken yet. I know I have to feel the sharpness of his knuckles whenever I attack you.

Milverton. Of course the writer of that abuse would say, and with some justice:—"This is your proper punishment for being a thief and a scoundrel." I reply, "At least, my friend, you ought to be very sure of the thieving and the scoundrelism of the man before you write down those accusations against him which are likely to be read by those who are nearest and dearest to him." I know, that I said to myself, I will be more careful even than I have been in making railing accusations against anybody. It is a little incident from which I derived some good, and perhaps, after all, have much to thank the writer for.

Blanche. I only say I wish we had him here !

Ellesmere. A beautiful quality in women is their promptness to forgive.

But, to return to the original subject, for you have wandered off from criticism to calumny. Criticism is but a child compared with calumny : mere bows and arrows to artillery.

Milverton. I am not so sure of that. I have something to say about calumny that I meant to have said to

you the other day when some one was making a great fuss about being calumniated. That calumny is great, I admit. No one, indeed, can well exaggerate her power ; or follow out her busy ways and singular ingenuity without mixed feelings of awe and admiration. How clever she is, for instance, in making use of dull, ignorant, and idle people, using them as the conduits to conduct, and the feeders to multiply the accidental remarks and jokes and malice of cleverer people, so that she fertilizes the whole groundwork of society with injurious reports, which cannot be well contradicted about her victims. Let any transaction be as white as a hound's tooth, she can so adroitly discolour it, that the original whiteness may never be restored. But any description that I could give of her would be poor compared with what Beaumarchais, who understood her better than any one else, has said.

Ellesmere. I do not recollect the passage.

Milverton. "La calomnie, monsieur ? Vous ne savez guère ce que vous dédaignez ; j'ai vu les plus honnêtes gens près d'en être accablés. Croyez qu'il n'y a pas de plate méchanceté, pas d'horreurs, pas de conte absurde, qu'on ne fasse adopter aux oisifs d'une grande ville en s'y prenant bien ; et nous avons ici des gens d'une adresse . . . ! D'abord un bruit léger, rasant le sol comme hirondelle avant l'orage, *pianissimo* murmure et file et sème en courant le trait empoisonné. Telle bouche le recueille, et *piano, piano* vous le glisse en l'oreille adroitement. Le mal est fait, il germe, il rampe, il chemine, et *rinforzando* de bouche en bouche il va le diable ; puis, tout-à-coup, ne sais comment, vous voyez calomnie se

dresser, siffler, s'enfler, grandir à vue d'œil. Elle s'élançe, étend son vol, tourbillonne, enveloppe, arrache, entraîne, éclate, et tonne ; et devient, grâce au ciel, un cri général un *crescendo* public, un chorus universel de haine et de proscription. Que diable y résisterait ?”

I have myself said sharp things against calumny, though not worthy to be mentioned on the same day with this passage from Beaumarchais ; but in my heart of hearts, I think I have wronged her, and I repent me of what I have said. Calumny herself has been a most calumniated “party,” to use the mercantile slang word of the day, and it is time that something should be said in her behalf.

Dunsford. Really, Milverton, this seems very paradoxical—not to say sophistical.

Ellesmere. I like it. I believe in it. Let us give three cheers for calumny.

Milverton. See the good that she has done : consider the comfort she has been to mankind. She makes men happy by giving them a grievance. Suppose she were not calumny, but truth ! Even the worst of us, forgetting what might truly be said against us, rejoice in the fact that the things that are said are for the most part calumnious. The bandit, to whom seventeen murders are charged, admits that he has had three or four “accidents,” but appeals to his wife whether he is not a calumniated man, and feels that society has done him a great wrong in charging the whole seventeen upon him.

Now consider the moon. We began by knowing nothing of her merits or demerits. She was highly lauded by poets ;

but she was very often deeply calumniated. Fickle, changeful, inconstant, were adjectives often applied to her. Strange, and not very creditable stories were invented about her amours. Then comes the astronomer. He tells us, it is true, of her merits and uses, but he takes a great deal of the poetry away from her. He treats her, perhaps, as a fragment split off from the earth : he pries into her adust surface of extinct volcanoes ; and, altogether, the moon, I imagine, would rather have been calumniated as fickle, amorous, inconstant, than truthfully mapped out by the astronomer royal. Depend upon it, there is not one of us who will bear as much looking into as the moon, and who had not better be contented with the calumnies uttered about him than run any risk of the truth being noised about. Besides, we all enjoy the advantage of having a grievance.

Ellesmere. I quite admit that last sentiment. A man without a grievance is a poor, naked creature. A rich man who has not had his losses ; a politician who has been rightly placed, and never misunderstood ; a lawyer or a divine who has met with promotion exactly at the right time ; an inventor who has really had his invention " taken into due consideration " by official persons ; a patriot who has never been in prison :—miserable men, all of them. And then, if calumny overlooks them, there is no chance of their getting a good grievance. I begin to be alive to the huge merits of calumny. Really, Milverton is a sensible man, sometimes.

Milverton. I will give you now one of the most curious instances of calumny I ever met with. It is about a man who lived many hundred years ago, an old Pope, John the

Twenty-Second. When I was a youth, I remember reading somewhere that the said John the Twenty-Second put people to death for being poor. This dwelt in my mind ; I thought to myself, this really was a strong measure on the part of the head of the Christian Church. Long afterwards I happened to get a glimpse of what was the origin of the story. Sundry monastic persons took it into their heads that they could not by any possibility hold property. The question was referred to the Pope. He decided that they could hold property. A raging controversy took place. No doubt some of these people were delivered over to the secular arm, but it was for denying the power of the Pope, and not for being poor.

Ellesmere. John the Twenty-Second ! What a vista of Popes John it gives us ; and I know nothing about them. I never remember their right names. I could not tell you, for instance, which Gregory it was who forbade the marriage of the clergy. A subtle man that, and wise in his generation. If there had been a Mrs. Thomas à Becket, the Constitutions of Clarendon would have been adopted easily enough ; at least I suspect so. All fathers of families are very malleable, if not absolutely unprincipled. Milverton would rob a church, or, at least, a chapel, in order to get Walter up a step in some profession. We bachelors are the only men in the world who are firm in principle and perfectly virtuous. We can afford to be so ; the others can not. What a House of Commons it would be, if it were elected by bachelors only ! In the next Reform Bill I shall propose taking away the power of voting from all married men, the fathers of families.

But to return to your story. Pope John the Twenty-

Second must have been a happy man. That was a grand calumny ; just the thing one would like to have said of one if one were perfectly innocent. I have always fancied that I should like to have a striking calumny current about myself, because I should then see who among my friends would stand by me through it. Besides, I am too much asked out to dinner now, and it would thin off the invitations mightily. Our friend Pontefract would invite me to breakfast ; and Milverton, believing in the calumny, would still ask me down to Worth-Ashton. The rest of the world would fight shy of me ; but I should not care much for that. Dunsford would write a sermon against me, and I should not care very much for that. But I am a hardened wretch. And now let us go to dinner, for it is about the time that decent people are getting their breakfast in England, and, consequently, rather late for the dinner at a German *table-d'hôte*. We have talked so much that I am immensely hungry. There is nothing like talking to ensure an appetite. All great talkers are great eaters.

Mr. Midhurst. Before this discussion ends, I must beg leave to say my say about it ; and that is, that you have all shown a want of knowledge of the world, and treated the matter a great deal too gravely. A large part of hostile criticism is but jubilant flippancy.

Ellesmere (aside to me). The sombre fat man means this for a hit at me. The bear has disliked the monkey from time immemorial.

Mr. Midhurst. But how can it be otherwise ? How difficult it is to praise and to amuse at the same time. Any monkey tricks [*Ellesmere. I told you so.*] are amusing in attack, or in dispraise : but let the most

practised writer try to praise, or to estimate justly, or to encourage, and he can hardly avoid becoming serious. Is there such a thing as "smart" praise? And "smartness" is the right article for the market; the one most eagerly demanded, the most readily produced. All praise, Sir John, is dull, except to the person praised, his wife, his grown-up daughters, and perhaps one or two intimate and loving friends. Such is mankind. I cannot help it. If it were a question of voting, I should vote that laudation should be as amusing as censure; but it cannot be made so, and there is an end of the matter.

Ellesmere. I should vote on the other side; for if praise were as amusing as censure, how we should be inundated by the praise uttered in little cliques and knots of men, of one another.

Mr. Midhurst. Puffing is not praise, Sir John, and puffing may be made amusing. Do not answer me. If we get into any controversy we shall be late for dinner, and no goodness of controversy can make up for coldness of soup.

CHAPTER V.

BIOGRAPHY.

WE had wandered through a long gallery of statues. Many of them were the statues of obscure men, but this did not prevent Ellesmere, who was in a very humorous mood, and acted as a sort of showman, from giving us a minute account of their lives, derived from what he saw in their countenances. Ellesmere is practically fond of statues, because, as he says, you can walk all round them ; whereas, he adds, you cannot get at the back of a picture. Then, he maintains, that the backs of men's heads are the most important parts of their heads, and besides, he says, men cannot screw them up into a hypocritical shape. This is just the paradoxical way in which Ellesmere loves to talk. From Ellesmere's biographies we passed to biography in general. At the beginning of the conversation Milverton did not do justice, I think, to some of the great biographical works that were mentioned. He seemed to have thought so himself, from the following remark which he made ; at

which point I take up the conversation, and from which I can record it pretty accurately.

Milverton. I am afraid I am not a fair judge of biography, I so much prefer to it the grand march of history : I do not like to see men massacred by cares and miseries in detail.

Ellesmere. "Nothing like leather," says the cordwainer.

Milverton. Yes, I must own that as a student of history I become more and more enamoured of the study. I seldom read late at night, thinking it an injudicious waste of life, but it was only the other night I found myself getting on to the small hours over an old chronicle which I have brought with me to study ; and I thought to myself I was just like a boy over his first novel of Walter Scott's, to devour which he has furtively lit his candle after the rest of the house is gone to bed.

As for romance, what is there to be compared with the history of the Popes ? Such works as Ranke and Dean Milman have written are to the mature mind what the *Tales of the Genii* are to the child. Now, you have a man dragged from a hermit's cell, in which he cannot stand upright, to be invested with the more than regal tiara, and to be the potentate of potentates on the earth. Then, from a Celestine the Fifth, who was forced into the Popedom after the above fashion, you have a Boniface the Eighth, one of the most accomplished men of his day, who is not dragged to power, but by consummate art, and by his dominating presence, grasps the Papacy with anything but unwilling hands ; who, as the Romans said

of him, "came in like a fox, ruled liked a lion, died like a dog."

What a supremely interesting business, age after age, is the choice of a Pope. He who would understand councils and learn how assemblages of men are swayed, will always find ample materials in studying the choice of Popes. Sometimes it was done in a day. Sometimes the impatient world had to wait for two or three years before the conclave of cardinals could be forced into a decision. What interests had to be conciliated, what fears dispelled, what hopes evoked, while this choice was going on; and often, after all this turmoil, that which was unforeseen and unschemed for prevailed in the college of cardinals as it does in the merest parish meeting.

Then, again, you have not a dominant vein of character, of one kind, which is to be seen in the long line of princes, where "Amurath to Amurath succeeds," as in our Plantagenets, our Tudors, or our Stuarts; but you have something far more interesting, a new character brought in each time to see what he can make of ruling this troubled world. Often utterly insecure in his own turbulent capital, and obliged to flee from it, he is governing with a high hand, and with unabated claims for dominion, the distant kingdoms of the earth. Age is found to be no impediment to ambition or to vigour; and a Gregory the Ninth, at eighty years of age, is ready to contest the palm of empire with an Emperor in his youth, or in his prime. Other high priests, patriarchs of Constantinople and the like, are great in their capitals; but their dominion dies away in distant circles, like the agitation of water, each ring becoming fainter and fainter;

while in the Middle Ages the Pope's supremacy tends to concentrate from without, from the distant to the near. Never was the triumph of great ideas over mere physical force so visible and so transcendent.

Ellesmere. I do not give up my *Tales of the Genii*, or the *Arabian Nights*.

Milverton. Nor do I pretend to despise fiction. I am voracious too over that ; but I will tell you a singular pleasure that there is in history which is seldom attached to fiction. You study the characters in a novel, and they come to their end in it, and you do not meet with them any more ; but in history, the same people reappear, or the results of their doings present themselves at distant periods from their own times, and at last, after some reading of history, you come to look at the principal actors as a large family party.

Ellesmere. Rather too large, I think, to be interesting.

Mr. Midhurst. I agree with Milverton. In different histories you find the same man involved in different sets of circumstances, and when you are reading about his conduct in one of these sets, you have the pleasure of a certain familiarity with him, and of contrasting his conduct under the differing circumstances.

Milverton. Yes : I have had experience of that, for instance, in observing Charles the Fifth as a ruler of colonies, and the same Charles as a European monarch. A similar thing may be noticed of our own people. England as a great colonial governor, England as a great European state—and the various bearings of one position upon the other, form an exceedingly interesting subject for thought. Then, say what you like (and Ellesmere will

be sure to say something very unpleasant), there is a satisfaction in reading about events that have happened, or are presumed to have happened, of statements that are true, or at least are meant to be true.

Ellesmere. I like to fancy what would happen to some bulky tomes of history if they were written in a certain magical ink, which, after a time, refused to hold lies, and so all that was false would suddenly disappear. There would be some blanks, eh, Milverton? A good many of the adjectives and adverbs would vanish from every page. Whole chapters assigned to explain the motives of the principal actors, would present a very white appearance, and would allow ample room for another set of motives to be introduced by a new commentator, which after a time, if they were written in the same ink, would also probably in their turn disappear, giving room for a wholesome and truthful blankness.

Milverton. In this respect history does not differ much from the narratives of everyday life. We must observe comment, and narrate, and must often make huge mistakes in history as in daily life. Still it is a noble effort of man to try and describe in the best way he can what has happened in the world. All literature, as Goethe says, is but a fragment of a fragment.

Ellesmere. If I were to make a confession about my likings for literature, I should say, that I was fond of fiction, that I did not dislike biography, that I could bear a good deal of poetry in fine weather, and that I had that respectful admiration for history, which is based upon a distant acquaintanceship, and not injured by over-familiarity.

Law-cases, now, are very nice reading, combining fiction and biography, and arising out of the most touching and poetical circumstances of human life—out of marriage settlements, for example.

Milverton. Talking of biographies, you behold that boy at his favourite pastime, endeavouring to make ducks and drakes, but the stream is too strong for him. There you see the greatest biographer of the coming age. Notable men would even now begin to cultivate his acquaintance in the hopes of being biographized by him, if they knew as much as I know about his biographical powers.

Ellesmere. So Walter is a genius after all. I knew he could throw a stone remarkably well, but I did not know he was a genius.

Dunsford. Milverton did not say he was a genius, but that he would become a good biographer.

Milverton. Thank you, Dunsford : Ellesmere is always keeping other people to the point. But you shall judge for yourselves of Walter's capacity as a biographer. Ever since Dunsford has chronicled our conversations, Ellesmere, we have become in some measure famous, or rather notorious. I cannot say we are much obliged to him for it, but so it is. I dare say, Ellesmere, that you are often applied to for a short sketch of your life.

Ellesmere. Oh yes, very often.

Milverton. I, too, sometimes have that honour inflicted upon me. Well, during Walter's last holidays, he heard me read out one morning at breakfast-time such an application. After breakfast he took a walk with me. I saw something was on the boy's mind. At last he suddenly

asked me, "Do sons often write the lives of fathers?"—"Often," I replied, "but I do not think they are the best kind of biographers, for you see, Walter, sons cannot well tell the faults and weaknesses of their fathers, and so filial biographies are often rather insipid performances."—"I don't know about that," he said, "I think I could write yours. I have made it already into chapters."—"Now then, my boy," I said, "begin it : let us have the outline at least." Walter then commenced his biography.

"The first chapter," he said, "should be you and I and Henry walking amongst the trees and settling which should be cut down, and which should be transplanted."—"A very pretty chapter," I said, "and a great deal might be made of it."—"The second chapter," he continued, "should be your going to the farm, and talking to the pigs."—"Also a very good chapter, my dear."—"The third chapter," he said, after a little thought, "should be your friends. I would describe them all, and what they could do." There you see, Ellesmere, you would come in largely, especially as to what you could do. "An excellent chapter," I exclaimed, and then of course I broke out into some paternal admonition about the choice of friends, which I know will have no effect whatever ; but still one cannot help uttering these paternal admonitions. "Now then," I said, "for chapter four." Here Walter paused, and looked about him vaguely for a minute or two. At length he seemed to have got hold of the right idea, for he burst out with the words, "My going back to school ;" and that, it seemed, was to be the end of the biography.

Now, was there ever so honest a biographer? His going back to school was the "be-all and end-all here"

with him, and he resolved it should be the same with his hero, and with everybody concerned in the story.

Then see what a pleasant biographer the boy is ! He does not drag his hero down through the vale of life, amidst declining fortune, breaking health, dwindling away of friends, and the usual dreariness of the last few stages. Neither does the biography end with the death of his hero ; and, by the way, it is not very pleasant to have one's children contemplating one's death, even for the sake of writing one's life ; but the biographer brings the adventures of his hero to an end by his own going back to school. How delightful it would be if most biographers planned their works after Walter's fashion : just gave a picture of their hero at his farm, or his business ; then at his pleasure, as Walter brought me amongst my trees ; then, to show what manner of man he was, gave some description of his friends ; and concluded by giving an account of their own going back to school—a conclusion that is greatly to be desired for many of them.

You will observe that he said nothing about the publication of letters, or of intimate conversations.

Ellesmere. I admire the boy amazingly. Henceforth I shall not call you Leonard Milverton, but Walter Milverton's, the great biographer's, father. Moreover, he shall write my life ; and I will entrust him with all the correspondence I have kept, which will consist of two or three invitations to dinner that by some chance have escaped burning with the rest of my letters. Meanwhile, I will go and assist him in throwing stones. I am a greater "dab," as he calls it, at that than he is ; and I do hope this will be mentioned in some one of the four

chapters which he may condescend to write about his father or myself.

A thought occurs to me. What if we were to go a little lower down in the creation than a boy? What if we were to choose a dog as a biographer? Depend upon it Fixer takes a just view of all our characters : a sound, hearty, English bull-dogian view. I forsake Walter Milverton ; and if my life is to be written at all, it shall be written by Fixer.

Here the dog being looked at by all of us, and conscious that he was being talked of, set up a melancholy howl, then went up to Milverton, put his fore-paws upon his knees, and tried to lick his face.

Ellesmere. The dog says, as plainly as dog-language can say, that all biography is odious to him. (Fixer, I am inclined to be of your opinion) ; but he adds, like a faithful creature as he is, that if he must write anybody's life, it shall be Milverton's. I see I must content myself with Walter, and, accordingly, I go to curry favour with my future biographer.

Milverton. No : stop a moment, Ellesmere ; I really want to show you in earnest what a good biographer Walter is. Contemplate again the beauty of the climax. As he winds up with the important event in his own life, and knows something about it, he really can describe it : whereas, when the ordinary biographer attempts to describe the important event in his hero's life, he generally makes but a sorry business of it ; and perhaps, it had better never be told at all. A poet of our own times has been heard to

say, "What a blessing it is, that, notwithstanding all the ferreting that has gone on, we know, comparatively speaking, so little of Shakespeare's life." I am always afraid of their finding out something more.

Mr. Midhurst. It is all very well for the unfortunate victims of biography to complain. Eels and lobsters would have a great deal to say too about the treatment they receive from mankind. But you must admit that the life of a man is a most amusing thing, even when written by his son—no allusion to Walter, whose work promises to be a splendid instance of biographical power and sagacity. I repeat, the life of a man is very amusing until the latter part of it, when it becomes intensely interesting.

Milverton. I really cannot agree with you, seeing how they are mostly written at present, being overlaid with trashy letters and unimportant details. It must be a very choice life, happily composed of thought and action, that should make a good subject for biography ; and——

Ellesmere. And the divine art of skipping, unhappily understood by few people, should be exercised liberally both in the writing and the reading.

Milverton. I admit that there is generally something—often two or three things—which are worth chronicling in the life of almost every man of mark ; but they are often intellectual facts, or I should rather say intellectual processes. Were these things recorded, our knowledge of psychology would be greatly increased. I have been exceedingly curious all my life to know how men of great intellectual labour perform their work. I believe I have told you this before. I always inquire, when I can, of every man renowned for work, how he gets through his

work. I wish I could call for a return of such statistical details.

Ellesmere. Do not trouble yourself: I can tell you in a very few words how all work is done. Getting up early, eating vigorously, saying "No" to intruders resolutely, doing one thing at a time, thinking over difficulties at odd times, *i.e.*, when stupid people are talking in the House of Commons, or speaking at the Bar, not indulging too much in affections of any kind which waste the time and energies, carefully changing the current of your thoughts before you go to bed, planning the work of the day in the quarter of an hour before you get up, playing with children occasionally, and avoiding fools as much as possible: that is the way to do a great deal of work.

Milverton. This is all very fine talking, my dear fellow; but will you tell me, in detail, how a working man shall avoid fools as much as possible? Why that one subject would form the most laborious essay and conversation we have ever attempted. It is the art of life; and you speak of it as if it were a little item of human conduct, which might be managed with the same ease as taking a bath every day: a thing by the way you might as well have thrown into your catalogue of ways and means for working sedulously.

But there are other things that men might tell us about themselves, which men hardly ever do tell, which a biographer seldom gets at, and yet which would be most useful to the world.

To give you an instance—a very remarkable instance. I was talking the other day, on this same subject of biography, with a well-known man of letters, who said,—

"There is only one thing in my life which is worth knowing, and it could be told in a page or two." I wish I could give the story in his own graphic words, but I will do the best I can.

"When I was a boy," he said, "I was at a large school where there were three hundred and twenty boys. You will hardly believe it, but it is nevertheless painfully true, that in one of the greatest branches of boy education there were three hundred and nineteen who were before me. In fact I was the stupidest boy in the school at original composition, for that was the subject. The head master gave out his theme, placing his cocked-hat on the table, and reading out a bit of Blair. I used to take the heading of the theme back to my room, spend half an hour in looking at it, placing it in different lights,—physically, not mentally,—and at the end found out that I had nothing whatever to say about it. My tutor, regarding me with an expression of unutterable pity, used to exclaim, 'Smithers' (we will call him Smithers), 'you are a good boy, and give me very little trouble. You are not without wits either, but you are the stupidest little dog at original composition that ever came under the administration of this ferule.'

"Time went on. I became a man ; and I suppose I may say without any great presumptuousness, that I have rather distanced my three hundred and nineteen young friends and rivals in what is called original composition. At least if I have not, I am the most successful impostor on record ; and I wish to heaven the imposture could be found out as speedily as possible, for I am troubled now, not only about my own original composition, but about

that of nearly all other men. Lawyers, poets, divines, statesmen, historians, publishers, send me their sermons, their acts of parliament, their memoranda, their histories, and their poems, and beg for criticisms, retrenchments, additions, or general remarks. When it is warm weather and people feel suggestive, I receive about three letters a week, pointing out to me what works I should write, and desiring me to sit down and write them instantly. I cannot therefore be blind to the fact that I have some power in composition, or have very successfully deluded the world into a belief that I have."

Ellesmere. I can guess who it is. But how did the man account for his early stupidity : that is what we want to know. Was he sickly as a boy, and vigorous as a man? Was his one of those slow-going intellects we sometimes, though rarely, read of?

Milverton. You may be sure I did not let him go away without accounting for the phenomenon. The explanation is as simple as a straight line. "The truth is," he said, "though not a bit better than other men, and in many respects, a great deal worse, I have about me a deadly kind of sincerity—an almost stupid sincerity. I never tell myself any lies, whatever I may do to the rest of the world. I cannot talk from derived thoughts. I must have seen or felt the things myself that I describe.

"Accordingly, when the master read out for a theme, 'Envy : the hissing serpent of the soul,' no ideas, or rather pretences of ideas, were kind enough to enter this unfortunate mind. I knew nothing whatever about envy, or whether it was a serpent or a black beetle. I did not even envy the little lads about me who had such a knack

of knocking off a theme about envy. To tell the truth, I did not acquire any knowledge of envy worth speaking of, until I got it rather late in life from the study of one man's character, who is notoriously one of the most envious persons in the world. For some time I supposed that man to be a very great critic, and a very wise man. At last I found out that envy was the motive power of his soul. After that study I could have dashed off themes about envy to any extent ; but, when I was a boy, you might have beaten me black and blue before you could have got out of me any ideas whatever on the subject.

“Now, let us take another subject for a theme. The master read out :—‘A great man is never greater than in adversity.’ I took the heading home, put it on my desk, and stared at it hopelessly. I did not know what a great man is like. I did not know what adversity is (we had no such thing as adversity at Mudford, where I was born) ; and, having a very sceptical nature, I should have doubted extremely whether the great man is greater in adversity.

“Now, I have some notion about great men. I have lived much in the world, and have seen a few great men. If I were one of your essay-writing people, I dare say I could write an essay on greatness. With adversity, too, I am now sufficiently well acquainted ; and, after much hesitation, I have made up my mind when a great man is greater in adversity, and I find that it depends upon his temperament ; and I think I could show you the kind of great man that will be greater in adversity, and the kind of great man that will be greater in prosperity. Oh

dear, dear ! How I wish I was back at school again ! What a theme I could rattle off upon this subject, and how I would delight the heart of my old tutor.

“ In the composition of verses, my inaptitude was still more abject and deplorable.

“ ‘ Dulce ridentem Lalagen amabo,
Dulce loquentem.’ ”

That was the subject for the week's verses. But I knew nothing about Lalage, and cared nothing about Lalage. Now, alas ! I could tell you a great deal about Lalage : perhaps a little too much. I am ready to make verses upon Lalage to an unlimited extent. I have half a mind to go back to school immediately, in order to have an opportunity of making the verses.

“ Now suppose my tutor, instead of being a kind-hearted, tolerant old gentleman, had been a vexatious, small-minded pedant, he would have had me scourged and pounded and held up to ridicule until really all possibility of ever writing about Lalage, or the great man in adversity, had been driven out of me. But, on the contrary (bless him for it !), he had faith in me, notwithstanding his grievous and painful doubts about my ‘ original composition,’ and sheltered me, and took my part, and polished up any rude stuff I could beg, borrow, or steal, about Lalage, or the great man in adversity. What a lesson this should be to masters, tutors, and parents, to be very careful lest they misunderstand a boy and punish him needlessly !

“ I cannot hide from myself that the very cause of my failure at school was the cause of my success afterwards.

Even when I write common-place things now, the world, which after all knows a great deal more about us than we think, sees that these common-places, are not common-places to me ; that I have thought them out painfully, and that they are serious things to me ; and accordingly it is interested by them. The same stupid sincerity is the sole secret of my success. Mark you, Milverton, the stupidity has not in the least degree diminished. If I wrote on the same subjects that you do, I could say nothing about them till I had seen the things themselves. Out of my own fancy, and relying upon other people's statements, I could not say anything whatever about the sewers of London, the cellars of Liverpool, the wynds of Edinburgh, or the cottages in Dorsetshire. I must work at them for myself. After seeing anything worth writing about, I am troubled with an overflow rather than a deficiency of ideas, and have to put a severe restraint upon myself not to say more than a quarter of what I think.

"There, sir," he concluded, "you have the confession of the stupidest boy among three hundred and twenty : and that is the only thing in my life worth recording."

Dunsford. This is a most valuable story, and I begin to fear lest I myself, when tutor of my college, should have said or done something harsh to some gentle youth, which he did not deserve.

Ellesmere. I know a gentle youth whom you treated like a dog, because he could not understand something in optics, which probably now will turn out to be all wrong, but which the docile Jones, and the cramming Brown, and the inveterately stupid Robinson understood at once, and saw no difficulty in. You asked them to a

wine-party, I recollect, and you did not ask me. I felt the neglect deeply.

Dunsford. Sir, I recollect to this day the immense number of impertinent excuses for utter idleness with which you used to vex me—pretending not to understand things that were as clear as daylight, and trying to involve me in all manner of contradictions when I was explaining anything to you. I partly guessed your tricks then. I know them now but too well. I was speaking of some honest, really perplexed individual, and not of such rogues as you.

Upon this Ellesmere got up, came with a very penitent attitude to me, and said, "Please, sir, may I have dinner to-day out of hall? Some friends have just come up to see me; and please, sir, I perfectly understand that problem in optics which you were so good as to explain to us; and I am sure I cannot think how I should ever have been so stupid as not to understand at once so lucid an explanation as that which you gave us; and may I have the order for dinner, sir? It is only for eight and a small-college man or two, and we don't count them as anything."

I gave him leave to have the dinner, for I have always been easily imposed upon, and we marched off to have our own dinner at the table-d'hôte.

CHAPTER VI.

PROVERBS.

WE were standing on the bridge at Wurzburg, and admiring the picturesque effect of the great statues which adorn the piers of that bridge. On the previous evening we had entered the town, coming over that bridge by moonlight; and I do not know that I ever saw anything ornamental in architecture that pleased me so much; but then I am an untraveller man, and am easily pleased. I expressed my admiration to the rest, and my wonder that no adornment of this kind had ever been tried, to my knowledge, in England. Milverton thus answered me.

You see, we are timid people; and we fear anything unusual. We may be dull, but we are resolved to be gentlemanlike. Hence our fear of bright colours, and our horror of anything that is singular in the way of decoration, however appropriate it may be.

Mr. Midhurst. I do not quite agree with this. I think some of the errors of the English, in point of taste arise from accidental circumstances. Our people are accustomed to ugliness. How does this arise? I say, from contractors having done the work of architects;

so that our buildings over large areas are turned out like manufactured goods, in set patterns. Of course this is the most expeditious and the cheapest mode of going to work ; but it is a great discouragement to the first-rate artisan ; and it throws the great architect into obscurity.

Ellesmere. When I hear you all talking in this way, especially Dunsford, who, after his patriotic fashion, is always anxious to adopt in England whatever he may see to be good in other countries, I am reminded of a certain Eastern proverb, which, from its graphic satire, always delighted me. "The horses of the pasha came down to the water to be shod ; the beetle stretched out his leg too." Dunsford sees the work of great men in great times, and thinks that he and his parish clerk, taking the advice of the other inhabitants of Mudfield-cum-Slushmore, will be able to turn out as good a thing, or a better. But is it not a good proverb ? Cannot you see the beetle stretching out his leg too ?

Milverton. You delight in proverbs, Ellesmere. You are a modern Sancho Panza.

Ellesmere. Yes : they are the cream of a nation's thought. But it has always been a great subject of curiosity with me how they got vogue, and, indeed, how they were ever invented. Nobody invents proverbs now ; at least I never heard but of one person who did, and his proverbs did not get any vogue. Now which do you think is the best proverb in the world ? It is, to my mind, a very common one. Guess.

Milverton. It is an absurd question. I dare say there are ten thousand very good proverbs in the world, and we should have to pick out that one which best suits the

Ellesmerian nature. Besides, when one reads a collection of proverbs, like Dean Trench's, for instance, one becomes utterly bewildered as to any choice among them. But tell us your favourite.

Ellesmere. It is an English one, known and appreciated, I have no doubt, by millions of people, "Nobody knows where the shoe pinches but the wearer." That is a consummate proverb : instantly intelligible ; drawn from the most familiar sources. A child can appreciate the truth of it, and yet it is so subtle and profound, that the oldest man will not have exhausted its meanings. There is another proverb that greatly delights me, but for a different reason :—"To *be* poor and *seem* poor is the very devil." Now it is a funny thing that that should be a favourite proverb in a Christian country. It tells a good deal about the inhabitants of that country, I think.

A curious idea has just come into my mind about proverbs, and one that you might work out, Milverton, with very considerable results. It is to observe what English proverbs the Americans have adopted. I would make a large bet that my shoe proverb is among them. Then it would be curious to see what proverbs they have invented for themselves. Altogether, I can foresee, that a shrewd man, if he could get at the facts about proverbs in the two countries, would cunningly weave out a disquisition on the differences of character in the two nations that would be well worth having.

I declare I am giving you quite a lecture about proverbs. Now I will put to you a difficulty which I have had, not about a proverb, but a proverbial expression. I have gradually arrived at the origin of many proverbial

expressions. There was one which used to puzzle me very much, often used by my father, and men of that standing. They used to say:—"Ignorant as dirt." It was always "Ignorant as dirt." Now I could not see why dirt should be ignorant. Dirt, as Lord Palmerston has admirably said, is "merely a thing in the wrong place." If the proverb had been against the creators or the maintainers of dirt, it would have been another thing. At last, however, the difficulty was explained, for one fine day I came upon the expression, "Ignorant as dirt," in that vast repertory of useful knowledge, the works of Mr. William Shakespeare. That accounts for its being used by men who, like my father, were steady listeners, night after night, to the plays of Shakespeare. As to the expression itself, as Shakespeare uses it, I question no further. I have complete confidence in him.

Then as to another expression:—"Drunk as a lord;" that is historical; that recalls the last century; that is true no more; but the expression remains. Now I come to my main difficulty, which will puzzle you all—"As mad as a hatter." Why a hatter?

Milverton. I can explain that at once. The perpetual working at anything so ugly must have a tendency to produce insanity. Think, too, of always being surrounded by multitudes of modern hats. If that is not enough to drive a man mad, what is?

Ellesmere. Ah, you joke: but I should really like to know the origin of that expression. By the way, *Milverton*, you spoke of *Sancho Panza*, and his proverbs: is it merely a peculiarity of *Sancho's*, or are the Spanish people generally given to the quotation of proverbs?

Milverton. I can hardly answer that question ; but the language is rich in proverbs,—far richer, I suspect, than that of any other nation. In the gravest works, even of theological writers, you find frequent reference to homely proverbs.

Ellesmere. Well, I will venture to say you will never bring any to equal my English one. I will not ask you to make the attempt at once ; but exercise your cruel memory—I say cruel, because any man with a very good memory is likely to be cruel in quotation—and bring us ten Spanish proverbs to-morrow, and see if my English one does not beat them all put together.

Milverton. I will do so ; but what should you say, my friend, if some fine day your proverb was to be altogether upset and rendered inapplicable ?

Ellesmere. What can you mean ?

Mr. Midhurst. Yes : what can he mean ?

Milverton. This age is full of great inventions. I honour them all, and admire the inventors. But one of the greatest inventions for the comfort of mankind is yet to be invented, and that is a good and cheap shoe. Some of you may laugh at this ; but Dunsford, who knows the ways of the poor well, will not laugh. I declare that if I were endeavouring to dissuade a poor couple from marrying, the first question I should ask them would be, “Have you thought about the expense for the shoes of the children ?”

I am confident that we have not yet made trial of the many new materials which have come into our hands. Some time or other, I will give my whole mind to the making of a shoe, and if I were to succeed, my name

would go down to posterity with Watt, Arkwright, Stephenson, and the man who first applied chloroform in cases of operation—Simpson, I think, was his name.

Ellesmere. And so you think to upset my pet proverb in that way, do you? You may make your good shoe, but fashion will always contrive to make it pinch somewhere. I have not the slightest fear for my proverb. It will last as long as Shakespeare. But don't you forget your ten Spanish proverbs, and bring them to us to-morrow well rendered in English.

Milverton. I will do so if I can. But in return I have a request to make of you. I could not help thinking, when you were delivering your short discourse on proverbs with so much force and perspicuity, why it should always have fallen upon me to write essays for the amusement of this good company. It is really your turn now, Ellesmere. It might be something of a worldly character, in which you could insert all those short, sharp sayings which you have evidently set such store by. It might be an elongated maxim of Rochefoucault's.

Ellesmere. I declare I have half a mind to do so, if only to put you all to shame for the disdain with which I see you treat worldly maxims. Let me see. What shall it be upon—the art of developing one's self from a small Rector into a considerable Bishop, eh, Dunsford? Or the truth which always abides (sometimes rather hidden), in good diplomacy, Mr. Midhurst? Or the art of making a sanitary treatise read and sell like a brilliant novel, eh, Milverton? Or the most delicate modes by which a rich and obedient husband may be ensnared, Miss Vernon and Miss Blanche? Such essays might be useful to this company.

Milverton. Yes : sum up all these in one grand essay ; and call it, the arts of advancement in life.

Mildred. It will be a nauseous essay.

Ellesmere. Perhaps. But you will all listen to it with much greater attention than if I were to give you one upon the beauty of Virtue, or the nobility of Benevolence, or any other stock subject for preachment. Being so sure beforehand of the suffrage of Miss Vernon, I cannot resist making a humble attempt at such an essay. But I must have my time to do it in. I cannot, like these practised writers, Milverton and Dunsford, spin off, at a moment's notice, an indefinite yarn upon any given subject, or none at all. Besides, there will be a great deal compressed into a short space, in what I shall have to say ; and even these writers will tell you, that when they have anything to say, and must say it briefly, they are obliged to take a long time about their work.

Mildred. I can see that the modesty of the performance will be nearly equal to its other merits.

Ellesmere. Thanks, thanks, for this encouragement.

Milverton. I shall not bring my ten Spanish proverbs till the essay is ready.

Ellesmere. Be it so. That is a bargain.

Here the conversation ended ; and we separated into parties to roam about the old town, and to walk in the palace gardens.

CHAPTER VII.

PROVERBS.

WE had to wait some time, both for Ellesmere's essay, and for Milverton's Spanish proverbs. I was somewhat surprised at Milverton's keeping us waiting, until he told me one day that he could remember Spanish proverbs by the dozen, and that he had written a great many down ; but, to tell the truth, he could not find one equal to the common English proverb which Ellesmere had quoted, and made so much of. He was therefore glad of the delay, in the hope that the wished-for proverb would suddenly come into his mind.

We had finished our stay at Würzburg, and were at Salzburg, when Ellesmere said he was ready, and that there was no longer any excuse for Milverton. It was very warm weather, and for our place of meeting we chose a sequestered spot whence we could see the snowy peaks of the Tyrolese Alps.

Ellesmere. Well, Milverton, are you ready for battle, with your ten Spaniards against my single Englishman ?

Milverton. You see, you are six English persons and a bull-dog who are to be the judges. Your proverb would not be worth much in Andalucia, where they wear sandals. However, I will begin at once. Before beginning, though, I must observe that most of my proverbs have a pleasant jingle about them, which will be lost in translation, but which is a valuable adjunct to a proverb, as making it more easily rememberable.

Callar y obrar, por la tierra y por la mar. "To work and be silent, by land and by sea."

Quien sufrió, venció. "He who suffered, conquered." You must admit that is a fine proverb.

Pensando á donde vas, te olvidas de donde vienes. "Thinking where you are going, you forget from whence you come."

Now here is a hit at the lawyers:—*Papel y tinta, y poca justicia.* "Plenty of paper and ink, and little justice."

El mentir no tiene alcavala. "Lying is not taxed."

Mira que ates, que desates. "Look that what you may tie, you can untie."

Quien se viste de ruin paño, dos veces se viste al año. "He who clothes himself in bad cloth, has new clothes twice a year."—A just estimation of cheap bargains, I think.

Here is a sly hit against councils. *Siete hermanos en un consejo, á las veces juzgan tuerto, á las veces derecho.* "Seven brothers in a council, sometimes they judge awry, sometimes aright."

Here is a proverb, which conveys a touching appeal for tolerance. *Mirais lo que bebo, y no la sed que tengo.* "You see what I drink, but not the thirst I suffer." If

we did but make some little allowance for our neighbour's thirst, we should judge more wisely sometimes. We are seldom thirsty ourselves just at the time when we are commenting upon thirsty people.

Here is rather a shrewd one, upon the advantage of fools. *Si el necio no fuese al mercado, no se venderia lo malo.* "If the fool did not go to market the damaged goods would never be sold."

Here is rather a deep one, which it is difficult to render fully. *Sigue razon, aunque á unos agrade, y á otros non.* "Right reason holds on its way, although it may please some, and others not."

Tanto es lo de mas, como lo de menos. "So much as there is of the more, so much there is of the less." That is a very wide proverb. One does not see at first how much may be made of it.

Ellesmere. Stop, stop! You are getting beyond the ten.

Milverton. Before I conclude, let me give you another, which it is quite fair to give, since it is French, and not Spanish. It occurred to me while I was hunting out the others in my memory. It is very ancient.

" Tout contraire en son contraire,
Prent vertu pour soi refaire."

Ellesmere. I see, Milverton, from your looks that you know you have lost. Some of your proverbs are deep and wide, but they are not familiar enough. Far the best one, as it seems to me,—and it is leagues behind my English one,—is, "See that you can untie what you tie." As a pendant to mine it is not bad.

There is great depth and weight, though, in that French proverb. Indeed it hardly seems like a proverb. Before one could master it thoroughly, seven German metaphysicians would have to evoke the "Idea" of "the Contrary" out of the depths of their own moral consciousness, and afterwards to express their ideas in nine three-volumed works.

Dunsford. What do you mean, Ellesmere?

Ellesmere. My meaning will be made more clear by a quotation from Lewes's *Life of Goethe*.

"A Frenchman, an Englishman, and a German were commissioned, it is said, to give the world the benefit of their views on that interesting animal, the Camel. Away goes the Frenchman to the *Jardin des Plantes*, spends an hour there in rapid investigation, returns, and writes a *feuilleton*, in which there is no phrase which the Academy can blame, but also no phrase which adds to the general knowledge. He is perfectly satisfied, however, and says, *Le voilà, le chameau!* The Englishman packs up his tea-caddy and a magazine of comforts; pitches his tent in the East; remains there studying the Camel in its habits; and returns with a thick volume of facts, arranged without order, expounded without philosophy, but serving as valuable materials for all who come after him. The German, despising the frivolity of the Frenchman, and the unphilosophical matter-of-factness of the Englishman, retires to his study, there *to construct the Idea of a Camel from out of the depths of his Moral Consciousness*. And he is still at it."*

* Vol. ii. p. 201.

How I have laughed over this bit ! I delight in the Frenchman more even than in the German—*Le voilà, le chameau !*

But to go back to our proverbs—you must admit, Milverton, that I have beaten you.

Milverton. Stay, stay, don't be so sure of the victory. Such an excellent Spanish proverb has occurred to me.

Ellesmere. Well ! If I ever heard anything like this. Imagine the Derby race just over, the second horse beaten by three lengths or some enormous distance of that kind, and the second jockey insisting upon having the race run over again because his foot had got out of the stirrup, or because he had dropped his whip, or because a fly had settled on his nose. The idea is preposterous : nevertheless, we will hear the proverb.

Milverton. I only know an English version of it. I recollect where I met with the proverb. In that charming book, *Northcote's Conversations with Hazlitt*.

Ellesmere. Another fatal flaw. That clever fellow Hazlitt might have coined the proverb. But let us have it.

Milverton. "He who returns the first blow, is the man who begins the quarrel." Is it not admirable ? That is just the point at which the stricken person has the game in his power ; and, if he have magnanimity and dignity, can almost always, without shame, prevent the quarrel. It is astonishing to find such a proverb amongst a people reported to be vengeful.

Ellesmere. It is very good, but it comes too late : we have no evidence that it is Spanish ; and it is not suffi-

ciently commonplace to come up to my beau ideal of a proverb. The victory * is doubly mine.

Mr. Midhurst. I congratulate Ellesmere on his victory, and look on it as a good omen for the forthcoming essay, which I am very impatient to hear.

* I could have diminished the credit of Ellesmere's victory very much, if I had known then, as I do now, that both the Italians and the Germans have a *proverb similar* to his English one—"Nessun sente da che parte preme la scarpa, se non chi se la calza." "Es weiss niemand besser wo der Schuh drückt, als der ihn trägt."—See *Polyglot of Foreign Proverbs*, by HENRY G. BOHN. London, 1875.

CHAPTER VIII.

Ellesmere. Now, before I begin, I must tell you that you will waste your time, if you give up your minds to criticising my style. Should you note anything inaccurate, or ungrammatical, you may conclude that it is put in on purpose. I am determined not to be a classic. Think what a dreadful thing it must be to be a classic. Imagine what the delicate, refined, weak-eyed Virgil must feel at his well-turned lines being chosen as an early exercise in Latin for every blockhead. Imagine how Horace smiles sadly, and lifts up his eyebrow somewhat cynically, at his odes and satires, many of which can only be understood by an experienced man of the world, being submitted as solid taskwork to every juvenile dunce. Pity poor, genial, elegant Ovid, when his lissome lines are droned over with innumerable false quantities by some perplexed dolt of a beginner; and lastly, think of grand old Homer, as he went musing or raging by "the sad sea-waves," having a vision of his sublime wrath, or his unrivalled simplicity of thought and diction, being hashed and hammered and tortured into nonsense by innumerable tyros. How these great men must feel as if they were dogs-eared all over! Besides, how encrusted their names are with the curses of unstudious boys. Now I do not wish in the future that any lad should say to another, "I can't get up my

confounded Ellesmere," while the other replies, "The beast! I've done him; but I missed such a jolly game of cricket last evening." No, ladies and gentlemen, I may be abused and misrepresented by you, as I dare say I shall be; but I do not mean to be a terror and a provocation to bad words for any distant generation. My style consequently will be what is called "slip-slop," by no means classical, but rather such as the generous youth of future periods of the earth will be told to avoid diligently—upon which they will declare that I am "a brick."

Milverton. How ingeniously he has endeavoured to prevent all criticism upon his style; but it may be bad "slip-slop," and not only unclassical but dull. Criticism is not to be balked or rendered nugatory by any of these artful mock-modest ways. However, let us begin. Ellesmere may, after all, prove to be a classic without knowing it, and even while he is intending the contrary.

Ellesmere then read the following essay:—

ON THE ARTS OF SELF-ADVANCEMENT.

IN the first place, it is desirable to be born north of the Tweed (I like to begin at the beginning of things); and if that cannot be managed, you must at least contrive to be born in a moderately-sized town—somewhere. You thus get the advantage of being favoured by a small community, without losing any individual force. If I had been born at Aff-

puddle—Milverton in Tolpuddle—and Dunsford in Tollerporcorum (there are such places, at least I saw them once arranged together in a petition to the House of Commons)—the men of Affpuddle, Tolpuddle, and Tollerporcorum would have been proud of us, would have been true to us, and would have helped to push our fortunes. I see, with my mind's eye, a statue of Dunsford raised in Tollerporcorum. You smile, I observe ; but it is the smile of ignorance, for let me tell you, it is of the first importance not to be born vaguely, as in London, or in some remote country-house. If you cannot, however, be born properly, contrive at least to be connected with some small sect or community, who may consider your renown as part of their renown, and be always ready to favour and defend you.

Work in a groove, a well-worn groove (see Leonard Milverton, *passim*). You profit by the labour of untold generations who have helped to wear a way for you. The man who attempts anything new may be a great man, may be an inventive genius, but he has no right to expect any remarkable share of advancement. Advancement loves the easy, level, well-beaten paths of life.

Originality of character may be harmful, eccentricity of conduct may be injurious, peculiarity in

dress or demeanour is most likely to be prejudicial to the man who would rise in the world ; but all these are nothing compared with the danger arising from any eccentricity of position. Let your position be commonplace, whatever you are yourself. If you are a genius, and contrive to conceal the fact, you really deserve to get on in the world, and you will do so, if only you keep upon the level road. Remember always that the world is a place where second-rate people mostly succeed : not fools, nor first-rate people.

Connect yourself in some way with the great Eating interest. Provide sustenance, or distribute it, or defend it : and do this obviously. Any employment which is not connected closely with the manifest and continuous wants of mankind, will depend upon their caprices, and be subject to their shallow criticisms. This at once disposes of Art, Science, and Literature. It may admit the Clothing interest, in so far as this is not connected with art, refinement, or good taste.

Be known, if you can, for pre-eminence in one thing, even if it be the making of a button. It jars against the self-complacency of men, and astonishes them—now you do not want to astonish them—to find that a man can do two things very well. Sir

Walter Scott, who knew mankind well, has spoken somewhere decisively upon this point, in reference to the great Lord Peterborough, who was a universal genius. Lord Bacon's life affords another instance ; Lord Carteret's, another ; and we all know many men who have remained obscure, chiefly because they could do too many things too well.

Do not indulge in loves or hatreds. They discompose the judgment, occupy time, and hinder self-advancement : but if you must indulge in these unprofitable passions—choose the hatreds.

In the commencement of affairs think always of the ending ; and picture to yourself innumerable difficulties. Do not suppose that anything will turn out rightly. Never believe in estimates ; and, generally, at the outset of a transaction, discourage, and seek to quell, all exuberant hopefulness in yourself. In the course of the transaction you will have need of all the hopefulness you can muster. It is best to begin with a little aversion, not only in marriage, but in all other affairs that are to endure for a long time. Mrs. Malaprop was a wise woman, but her wisdom may be more extensively applied than she applied it.

Take almost anything that is offered to you in the way of advancement. A person who is nicely and scrupulously observant of his own claims and merits

misses golden opportunities—and the years soon go by. I will refer you to Guicciardini on this point:—

“ Let him who would be employed beware of letting the possession of Business be drawn away from him : for one thing doth give occasion to another, and this not only, because from one thing thou dost naturally step on to another, but because of the reputation which being seen occupied in Affairs shall bring thee. Wherefore the proverb is here also proper ; one thing is father to another.” *

The shortness of life is a fruitful subject to moralists and sermon-writers. By the way, they have made life seem longer by making it duller. But this shortness of life is seldom fully appreciated by busy men of the world. Almost everybody's plans are laid down on too large a scale. On this point, Horace is good reading ; and a living statesman has not ill summed up life, when he wrote, “ Youth is a blunder : manhood a struggle : old age a regret.” He might, however, have appointed the three evils to each stage of life, and not have been very far from the truth.

* *The Maxims of Francis Guicciardini*, translated by Emma Martin, No. 78, p. 83.

Avoid all actions with others to which you cannot give continuous attention. If you illuminate your work, Dunsford, that last maxim of mine should be written in letters of gold. You all think me a hard-hearted man, and the expression on your countenances has hitherto been rather that of disgust than approbation. But if you knew how much misery I have seen in the course of my profession—and sympathized with—arising out of the neglect of the foregoing maxim, you would at least give me credit for having some pitifulness in me. However, whether you do or not, I shall continue in the same strain.

Bring misfortune soon to a conclusion. There is a time when a wise man sees that a thing unfortunately begun, or ill-guided, will not improve. It drags on in the dirt, and becomes a heavier burden every day. The man who is careful of his fortunes will have the courageous wisdom to count his loss, and to put up with it. In connection with such a state of affairs I would advise you not to dwell much upon your failures. Pass on. Do not look back too much. Life will not bear this retrospection; and indulgence in vain regret is not a fitting luxury for those who have their fortunes to make. As some wise French writer has said:—“*Oublier, c'est le grand secret des natures fortes et créatrices.*”

Remember always that what is real and substantive ultimately has its way in this world.

You make good bricks, for instance ; it is in vain that your enemies prove that you are a heretic in morals, politics, and religion ; insinuate that you beat your wife ; and dwell loudly on the fact that you failed in making picture-frames. In so far as you are a good brick-maker, you have all the power that depends on good brick-making ; and the world will mainly look to your positive qualities as a brick-maker.

This is a great consolation. You commit an error ; you make a failure : you fall into discredit : and you think that you will never more have force or reputation in the world. This is a mistake. Only pluck up heart, and do something that is good or at least serviceable ; and you will be astonished to find how soon you are re-instated, and how much of your pristine vigour you have recovered. But if you cannot obey the French maxim above quoted, that recommends forgetfulness, you will go on teasing yourself about the past, until you lose all power of doing something substantially useful and forcible, which may enable you to recover lost ground. The French writer proceeds to say, that you must forget “after the manner of Nature, which takes no cogniz-

ance of the past, but recommences at every hour the mysteries of her indefatigable productiveness." *

In acting with other men, do not set them up in your mind as wonderful heroes, abiding in consistency, and actuated by motives that are almost impossible to overcome. It is true that no calculation has yet been made of men's vanity which has been found too large ; but of all other motives you are likely to overrate the force.

When you have, therefore, to act with other men, calculate on their vanity being inordinate, on their weariness and forgetfulness being very great, and on their placability being excessive.

Attempt little : remembering the immense knowledge that it requires to live wisely. Observe that men of three-score and upwards say that they are just beginning to understand the world well enough to commence living in it : and ask yourself whether this is a place, or human beings the people, who can venture to attempt much.

* These are the French words. I do not know where Ellesmere found them, but I have since seen the passage in a work called *Life's Problems*, p. 172, London, 1857 :—

“Les existences foibles vivent dans les douleurs au lieu de les changer en apophthègmes d'expérience. Elles s'en saturent et s'usent en retrogradant chaque jour dans les malheurs consommés. Oublier, c'est le grand secret des existences fortes et créatrices,—oublier à la manière de la Nature, qui ne se connaît point de passé, qui recommence à toute heure les mystères de ses infatigables enfantements.”

Avoid delicacy. A delicate, refined man, who cannot ask for his due, cannot put forward his just claims, cannot say that he wants anything, or cannot say it with sufficient persistence and frequency—cannot make himself visible and prominent at the right time, though he knows the right time—may be a beautiful product of creation, very loveable, very much to be admired : but he must be content with being this beautiful product, and not presume to think that he will ever make any advance upon his original condition in life. This earth is not for the refined. They cannot expect to get anything in the scuffle that is going on. You all remember the well-known story of Lord Thurlow ! how, whenever a bishopric was vacant, he always said to the King, “Please your Majesty, I have a brother,” until at last George the Third a (man not without persistency himself) was tired of hearing this cuckoo exclamation from his Chancellor, and gave a bishopric to the brother. Again, in business it often happens that a man is too delicate to ask a question which ought to be asked, which he knows ought to be asked, which he longs to ask ; and his not asking this question is for ever a detriment to him—perhaps, his ruin.

The question of intimacy with others enters into

considerations of self-advancement. Intimate friends nearly always injure you ; yet it is tempting to have a friend, and it would be very useful to have one, if friends were not as careless as they often are in damaging your reputation. The man who studies self-advancement may have, nay should have, many persons with whom he has a certain intimacy, but there should be that distance between them at which respect is most sure to be maintained. We all underestimate those whom we know best, and keep our choicest civilities, sometimes even our best benefits, for those who are comparatively unknown to us, and who, therefore, have most estimation with us, and most repute. I will admit, for I am not a pedantic layer down of maxims, like some people (Now should I have said this disrespectful thing if I had not been an intimate friend of these "some people"?)—I will admit that a refined and delicate man may indulge in an intimate friendship. He is sure not to say the right thing, at the right time, for himself. But the man who can speak up for himself can do without intimate friends. [Oh ! oh ! and murmurs of disapprobation from all the company.]

I do not care about these murmurs. They will not affect the jury, for my jurymen are to be chosen from men of the world, seeking advancement.

Next to the question of friends comes that of agents. In one respect, I think, they may be trusted largely. That is, as to their fidelity. There is much less mischief done by faithlessness in agents than is generally supposed. But you cannot overrate too much the chances of their neglecting to do what you have told them.* You must follow up, through all its stages, any business that you wish to be sure of succeeding. Constant and tiresome inquiries must be made, as to whether the thing is done that you have ordered to be done. I knew all this before, but I re-learnt it from M. Thiers. He has somewhere or other described his conduct when making preparations for war—How he believed in nothing without sufficient evidence: and how he required vouchers and receipts at every stage of the proceedings, to prove to his own satisfaction that his orders had been faithfully transmitted, and exactly executed. There was no distant point of the web that did not tremble to his touch. He never quitted hold of the great

* "How entirely all things depend upon the mode of executing them, and how ridiculous mere theories are! My successor thought, as half the world always thinks, that a man in command has only to order, and obedience will follow. Hence they are baffled, not from want of talent, but from inactivity, vainly thinking that while they spare themselves every one under them will work like horses." (Sir Charles J. Napier.)

affairs before him : " at last," he says, " my very dreams were administrative." That is the way in which war should be prepared for ; and let me tell you, something of the same spirit should enter into the conduct of all affairs that are worth conducting at all.

But the difficulty of difficulties, and the thing that requires an imaginative supervision, is the joining of different kinds of work together so that no time or substance be lost. I prefer to illustrate this by very common household matters, though I might have taken the greatest affairs of nations to exemplify my text. You have some work of building, or repairing, on hand. Men of different kinds of handicraft must be employed on it. The mason is doing his work, but is thinking of no other kind of handicraft. The carpenter is doing his, but remains oblivious that there are any other artisans but carpenters in the world. Meanwhile the blacksmith has received imperfect orders, or is not observed in the execution of complete orders. The end is, that the whole work stands still at a critical period for want of some bolts, or bars, or iron girders. Every country gentleman will feel the force of this illustration. Every general ought to appreciate it still more feelingly. But the same kind of mistiming, and the same deficiency of arrangement, are visible right

through all human affairs ; and efficiency in a first-rate subordinate is never so well tested as by observing how he contrives that the work, to use a builder's phrase, should "follow on." "Armies whole have sunk " not so much in "Damietta's bog," as they have fallen to perdition through the interstices of ill-contrived arrangement. The bolts and bars are not there. Time is lost. Opportunity, more coy than any maiden, is also lost : and a vast and costly apparatus comes to nought for want of the right thing—often a small thing—at the right time and place. The man who should prevent this is generally not a hopeful person ; but is inclined to believe that everything will go wrong, and that almost everything will be too late. Such a subordinate is sure of success, if there is any attention paid to merit ; and the man who employs him is also sure of success in any business which requires the supervision of such a subordinate.

I have too long detained my hearers, my approving hearers, upon the mere modes of action. I now pass to a much more important branch of my subject. Those who wish for self-advancement should remember, that the art in life is not so much to do a thing well, as to get a thing that has been moderately

well done largely talked about. Some foolish people, who should have belonged to another planet, give all their minds to doing their work well. This is an entire mistake. This is a grievous loss of power. Such a method of proceeding may be very well in Jupiter, Mars, or Saturn, but is totally out of place in this puffing, advertising, bill-sticking part of creation. To rush into the battle of life without an abundance of kettle-drums and trumpets is a weak and ill-advised adventure, however well-armed and well-accounted you may be. As I hate vague maxims I will at once lay down the proportions in which force of any kind should be used in this world. Suppose you have a force which may be represented by the number one hundred: seventy-three parts at least of that force should be given to the trumpet; the remaining twenty-seven parts may not disadvantageously be spent in doing the thing which is to be trumpeted. This is a rule unlike some rules in grammar, which are entangled and controlled by a multitude of vexatious exceptions; but it applies equally to the conduct of all matters on earth, whether social, moral, artistic, literary, political, or religious.

I now proceed to speak about the qualities that should be in a man, and that he should sedulously

cultivate, in order to ensure self-advancement. In reality, however, it is not the individual qualities, but the combination of them, and the proportion they bear one to another, that make the complete man. The reason why in such matters maxims fail in doing much is, that, if adopted at all, they are not adopted harmoniously and bound together in due proportions, so that you have the plums, and the flour, and the water, and the spice, but in the end, a very indifferent plum-pudding. To lay down rules, though, about this combination and proportion is beyond my art. Like other writers of essays, I can only impart my wisdom bit by bit, and nature must always be left to make the exquisite admixture which is needful.

In the first place, the man who wishes for self-advancement must be industrious. This seems a common-place remark, but is not so. It is imagined, for instance, that any clever man can get up a subject very quickly. This is all a delusion, and we lawyers are the people who have especially deluded mankind in this matter. They see us crammed, as they suppose, overnight, or early in the morning before going into court, with the details of a subject, and they suppose that a similar thing can be done in any other department of human life ; but they forget that a law case when it comes for adjudication is often a very

limited and narrow affair ; and they also forget that these details, which they see supplied to us at the last moment, fall into the right places in our minds—the places prepared for them by long previous study and experience. My man who is to succeed must not only be industrious, but, to use an expression of a learned friend of mine, he must have “an almost ignominious love of details.” Look at the House of Commons for an exemplification of this maxim. Without immense industry no sure and abiding success is obtained. It is in vain that you cram a man with the details for a speech. In the first place, he never has the confidence to use them well and heartily, and in the next you prepare him to hit in a certain direction, say, straight forward, and all the telling blows of the adversary come sideways—a mode of attack for which the unhappy crammed man is in noway prepared.

Next to industry comes promptness. Lord Bacon has well noticed that the men whom powerful persons love to have about them, are ready men—men of resource. The reason is obvious. A man in power has perhaps thirty or forty decisions to make in a day. This is very fatiguing and perplexing to the mind. Any one, therefore, who can assist him with ready resource and prompt means of execution, even

in the trifling matters of the day, soon becomes an invaluable subordinate, worthy of all favour.

Next to promptness, comes a certain limitation of view, which is very needful to the man who would succeed. Human affairs are provided for from day to day. The man who sees too widely is nearly sure to be indecisive, or to appear so. Hence, also, comes an appearance, sometimes of shuffling, and sometimes of over-subtlety, which is very harmful to a man. There is a delusion, too, in this width of purview. You see the extent of horizon, but do not make out the roads. You think you know more than you do ; while your knowledge is rather that of a landscape-painter than of a general. I would advise you to know very clearly and accurately the ground close about you ; remembering, with regard to the distance, that wise French proverb, which declares that nothing is certain to happen but the unforeseen.

But the best reason for being limited in your views is that other people are limited, and that you do not act in harmony with them if you are very far-sighted. I would not, however, speak against far-sightedness, if a man who possesses it would only know on what occasions to keep it to himself.

I am now going to say something which may appear inconsistent with what I have previously said.

I cannot help that : it is true ; and the right selection and combination of my sayings must be made by a judicious person. One maxim is good now, another maxim good then : and the “ now ” and the “ then ” come within the undescribed—perhaps undescribable—province of common sense. I have moralized upon the swiftness with which time passes. I have urged the seizing of every opportunity that can be seized. But, at the same time, it must be remembered that the man who studies self-advancement judiciously, must know how to wait. There are occasions and positions in life in which every move will be a bad one. It requires great self-command at such junctures to pause, and wait ; especially for an energetic man who is used to action. But he must learn the wisdom of doing nothing—the only wisdom left him in such cases to act upon, or rather, to be passive upon. I have no doubt that, in support of this view, I might quote largely from Machiavelli and Guicciardini ; but a man of the world will not need the authority of these gentlemen with long names to convince him of the truth and importance of my proposition. Let him only be able to apply it.

Of course, my hero must be egotistic ; but his egotism must be of a peculiar kind. It must not be tiresome. It must be useful egotism, that can be

worked into something. I would say to such a man : —Be modest in speech about your merits, but not in demands that may further your fortunes.

Finally, if I must make a combination of the kind of qualities which my hero should possess, I should describe him thus. He should be industrious, hard, prompt, frank, self-sufficing, and somewhat unrefined. I say “somewhat” unrefined advisedly. For if he have not some refinement, he will have no tact ; and will not from slight indications understand what men think and mean, and feel, but must be content to judge of them by what they say, which gives but a small insight into the ways of mankind. His purposes must be few and clear. Numbers of clever men who could do anything, never make up their minds distinctly as to what they want, or what they intend to be. Often they want inconsistent things. How can such men expect to succeed ? He should have a certain joyous superficiality of character which prevents ill-success from affecting him too deeply ; for there will be plenty of ill-success even in the most prosperous career. After all, he must not care too deeply about the world, if he is to use it wisely and skilfully. Lastly, he must be brave and bold, for civil affairs need fully as much bravery as those of the sword ; and a bold, brave man may be defeated, but

is seldom utterly discomfited, or his affairs put to fatal rout. Industrious and resolute as a Scotchman, cautious and observant as a wild Indian, cool and brave as an English soldier marching up, under orders, to a battery, he will not fail to succeed in any department of life—provided always he keeps for the most part to one department, and does not attempt to conquer in many directions at once. I only hope that, having profited by this wisdom of mine, he will give me a share of the spoil.



Milverton. Well, of all the intolerable wretches and blackguards—

Mr. Midhurst. A conceited prig, too !

Dunsford. A wicked, designing villain !

Ellesmere. Any more : any more ? Pray go on, gentlemen ; and have you, ladies, nothing to say against the wise man of the world that I have depicted ?

Mildred. There are some truths, though, in the essay,—for instance, when Sir John said that men's vanity was unconscionable.

Blanche. I did not understand much about the essay, but I saw that the hero was always to be base, and I am sure my cousin would not approve of any part of it.

Ellesmere. I have now collected all your suffrages, and I see clearly, what I suspected before, that a man who keeps to his subject is not likely to have his lucubrations well received in this company. Did I say that my

hero, as Miss Blanche calls him, was a good man, or a great man, or a noble man? I merely said he would know how to get on in the world. I have given you a series of opinions, the like to which, if they had been pronounced upon law cases, would have produced not less than seven hundred and fifty-three guineas. I have given them to you for nothing, and it is a lesson to me for the future not to give anything for nothing. Indeed I shall add that maxim to any future edition of my essay.

Mr. Midhurst. There was a sentence in it that might have been one of those quotations you threatened us with from Machiavelli.

Milverton. Why it was all Machiavelli from beginning to end. Does not that respectable gentleman say, that his model Prince should be part man, part beast; * at any rate that he should know how to use the beast-nature, a precept which is shadowed forth, he says, in the fable that Achilles and other princes of antiquity were brought up by the centaur Chiron? Ellesmere's model man would, I am sure, have delighted Machiavelli.

Ellesmere. A worthy man that, not appreciated by his

* "Pertanto ad un principe è necessario saper bene usare la bestia e l'uomo. Questa parte è stata insegnata a' principi copertamente dagli antichi scrittori, i quali scrivono come Achille, e molti altri di quelli principi antichi furono dati a nutrire a Chirone Centauro, che sotto la sua disciplina li custodisse; il che non vuole dire altro l'avere per precettore un mezzo bestia e mezzo uomo, se non che bisogna ad un principe sapere usare l'una e l'altra natura, e l'una senza l'altra non è durabile."—MACHIAVELLI, vol. v. *Il Principe*. Cap. 18. "*In che modo i principi debbono osservare la fede.*"

own age, or any succeeding age. Like me, he kept to his subject, and suffered accordingly—but the sentence, Mr. Midhurst.

Mr. Midhurst. Give me the paper. (*Reads :*) “Do not indulge in loves, or hatreds ; but if you must indulge in these unprofitable passions—choose the hatreds.”

Ellesmere. Well, that is sound doctrine—sound in the main at least ; for perhaps I should have said, that he might indulge in a few judicious hatreds, as I have known instances where a man has decidedly lost ground with the world by being always kind and placable. I have seen such in political life.

Milverton. You are mistaken, Ellesmere. There are no judicious hatreds, but there are such things as judicious outbursts of indignation.

Ellesmere. Ah, now we come to the real Machiavelli. There is the man.

Blanche. Leonard, do take the taste away from us of his dreadful essay. Repeat to them that bit of the *Laodamia* which you were quoting to me as we came along. Mr. Ellesmere’s perfect man of the world will not, I fancy, in any future region rise to that height.

Dunsford. Wait a minute, my dear. I should like to hear the *Laodamia* too ; but I must make a remark first about the essay.

Pre-eminent amongst the many atrocious things which Ellesmere has brought forward in this essay of his was the statement that he made about the use of the trumpet, and about a man’s giving his principal attention not to doing a thing, but to getting it talked about.

Blanche. Shocking !

Mildred. Horrible !

Mr. Midhurst. Disgusting !

Milverton. Oh, it was only his fun.

Ellesmere. It was not his fun. It was his most earnest earnestness. Suppose a mountebank, on entering a town, were to make known his coming confidentially, in choice English, to the principal inhabitants only—would anybody buy his wares, I ask ?

Dunsford. I did not know that you were speaking entirely of mountebanks.

Ellesmere. Not entirely ; but take horsemanship, in which something laborious and adroit is accomplished. Would anybody come to see the Circus, if the Circus people entered the town in a quiet, easy, gentlemanly manner, instead of with kettle-drums and trumpets, seated in state, on a car with sixteen piebald horses, which stops up the way, and compels everybody to be aware that the unrivalled performers “who very lately had the honour of attending Her Majesty at Windsor” have just arrived, “to stay one night only,” in the little town of Sleepy-Scandal. As for you, benevolent, high-minded, puff-despising blockheads and blockheadesses, whom I have the honour of addressing, you porcine creatures before whom pearls are being strewn in vain, you would starve, you would not even have roots to eat, if you had your living to get, and were to set about doing so in your high-minded, dispuffative fashion.

Mr. Midhurst. There is one thing in the way of puffing which I never get used to ; and that is the “*claqueurs*” in a French theatre, whose applause is regulated by the most careful pre-arrangement.

Dunsford. Friends of the author, I suppose ?

Ellesmere. You innocent creature ! No ; they are hired people. They are there every night. I suppose you have been to a French play ?

Dunsford. Yes : and, now I think of it, I do remember noticing that their applause used to break off abruptly ; but then I imagined it was because the French had a higher feeling for art than we have, and took good care not to interrupt their actors.

Mr. Midhurst. The most amusing instance of puffery I know, and which always sets me off laughing when I think of it, is that of which some pill manufactory is accused. In the open shop you see a line of people busily making up these pills in boxes, and sealing the covers with an anxious rapidity, as if the orders were unlimited, and as if poor humanity could not exist a moment longer without its due supply of pills. Then, underground, they tell me, there is another line of persons who are as busily employed in undoing these packages, and throwing the pills back into barrels. This is very humorous. *Se non è vero, è ben trovato.*

Ellesmere. Now the puffery that tickles me is of a more gentlemanly and diplomatic kind. You enter a room where there is a picture for exhibition, perhaps a work of real merit ; but still they call in the aid of puffery. You observe a gentlemanly person who comes hastily into the room, looks anxiously at the picture, and regrets that it will not be exhibited for more than three days longer. Or he is very eager to purchase an engraving of the picture, hearing that there are not many to be had now. Perhaps if you were to come again a few hours hence, you

would find the same individual rushing in and making the same remarks in exactly the same language. I suppose it would be too expensive to pay a man who could vary his language. But the device is highly comical, I think.

All these stories tend to prove my assertion, that the trumpet must be largely and loudly blown. I would rest my argument on this solid ground : if bad things require to be puffed ; how much more must good things ? I heard Dunsford mention once in a sermon that whatever is bad has an attraction for mankind. If, then, this innate attractiveness cannot be relied on, and you must still have the aid of puffing, what would become of that which is naturally repulsive, because it is good, if you were foolish enough to leave it to make its way by its own merits only ?

Dunsford. Oh, you sophist !

Milverton. Now, good people, do not be afraid that I am going to join with Ellesmere, but what he has been saying has suggested something to me which I must impart to you. I do think with him that much force is often wasted by most of it being applied directly. The study, for instance, of times, seasons, and opportunities of putting forward anything is almost as requisite as study about the thing itself. Indeed I would go further, and am not afraid to say, that if I cared for any reform very much, and it had to be advocated in Parliament, I would not, with my present knowledge of the world, as a young member, bring that subject prominently forward, especially if it were one distasteful to the public, but would seek to gain force and reputation in other

ways, and bide my time as regards the reform I had most at heart.

Mr. Midhurst. What a long way off Milverton has led us from Ellesmere's pleasant and ironical baseness.

Ellesmere. I repudiate Milverton's assistance, and I deny Mr. Midhurst's "pleasantry and irony." I say that puffing, and advertising, and managing the world about the reception of the thing you want to get received, are half the battle. I suppose I must remind you for the hundredth time, that I am not drawing the picture of a perfect man, but of a man who is to get on in the world—in this imperfect, earthy, dirty world.

Milverton. Of course there is a great deal of truth in what Ellesmere says.

Ellesmere. You are the only fair person of all my audience.

Milverton. But this fact (I do not mean that I am a fair person, but that puffing does so much,) makes it only more requisite that men in power should endeavour to further the unpuffed man, and to look well into the untrumpeted work of art, the not highly-connected project, and the device that has few influential friends.

Ellesmere. That may be. That is a wise and very just corollary from my proposition, but does not in the least diminish its validity. The truth is, Dunsford, that if you should ever publish this essay of mine, it is the only part of your book which men of the world will take the trouble of reading. They will pretend to have read the rest, because it is always creditable to have read a dull book, and the duller the more creditable. But my pages will be the dogs-eared ones ; except of course in the copies that

belong to girls, clergymen, philanthropists, and other good sort of simple, weak-minded people, whom nobody would care to have as readers of his work.

Milverton. Now about the style of the essay : I really must say something on that head. Ellesmere has so often criticised my style, that now, when "the whirligig of Time has brought round its revenges," I should be more than mortal if I were to refrain from saying something a little disagreeable. The sentences seemed to come upon one, like, as I imagine, shot would descend from a shot-making tower—little, round, hard, unconnected things. There was a want, if I may venture to say so, of what Horace would call "crafty joinings" (*callida junctura*). It was not an essay so much as a speech. At one time he seemed to be addressing us : at another, his self-advancing scoundrel : at another, his shot were aimed at anybody or nobody. Then his quotations came in like the references of lawyers to cases ; and Thiers, Thurlow, Sir Walter Scott, Mrs. Malaprop, and Lord Peterborough were alluded to, just as he would have quoted *Robinson v. Smith* (Simon's Reports) ; or *Jones v. Jones* (Brown's Chancery Cases) ; and so on.

Ellesmere. I disdain to reply to this revengeful criticism. I told you before, that I did not wish to become a classic ; and I am glad to see that, in the opinion of so good a judge, I have no chance of becoming one. Answer my arguments if you can, and do not comment on the form in which they are conveyed.

Milverton. There certainly are some good things in the essay.

Ellesmere. Good things, in it ! I believe there are

and such as you, of all men, might profit by. Indeed I put in one or two of them on purpose for you, you ungrateful man. You desire power, do you not? You will never get it unless you change very much. Once in power, you will be unscrupulous enough. I do not mean anything offensive. I mean that you would make and accept conclusions rapidly and decisively, that you would indulge in compromises and be contented like the rest of us with the second and third best instead of foolishly aiming at a fancied perfection. But in getting to power you would be as scrupulous as a tender-hearted girl. As a friend I like you the better for this; as a man of the world, I despise you, Sir. If you were to canvass a constituency, you would bring out all the points of difference instead of slurring these points over judiciously. If they were raging for the Ballot, you would sedulously point out all the dangers and difficulties of the measure, and even be inclined to conceal any favourable opinion that you might have of any of its bearings. Good creatures such men may be (you may observe that the word "creature" is always applied contemptuously), but you are despicable as politicians.

Milverton. Ellesmere seems to be thoroughly imbued with the notion contained in that Eastern proverb—"The meanest of reptiles are found on the tops of the highest pillars." Now I do not believe that that proverb applies to the West so strongly.

Ellesmere. Well, you must admit, however, that there should be a little judicious slime expended in mounting.

Dunsford. I could not help thinking all the time that Ellesmere was enumerating his various subtle basenesses,

of the great saying, "Heaven is probably a place for those who have failed upon earth."

Ellesmere. No doubt there are many pretty sayings in vogue with the unsuccessful. I do not find, however, that they make use of these sayings until they *have* failed.

Dunsford. I interrupted you, Blanche, some time ago, when you were asking your cousin to quote a stanza from the *Laodamia*. It would come in well now.

Milverton.

"He spake of love, such love as Spirits feel
In worlds whose course is equable and pure ;
No fears to beat away—no strife to heal—
The past unsighed for, and the future sure ;
Spake of heroic acts in graver mood
Revived, with finer harmony pursued ;

"Of all that is most beauteous—imaged there
In happier beauty ; more pellucid streams,
An ampler ether, a diviner air,
And fields invested with purpureal gleams ;
Climes which the sun, who sheds the brightest day
Earth knows, is all unworthy to survey."

Ellesmere. Well, there is one thing, Milverton, I do envy you ; but it is not an accomplishment which my man of the world will be anxious to possess. Indeed, I shall not let him have it. It is the power of quoting from memory all manner of beautiful bits—or what, at least, you suppose to be beautiful bits—of poetry and prose.

Milverton. I have all my life made a point of learning by heart the few things in any author which I exceedingly admire. They are to me great possessions ; and some-

times, when I am travelling alone, I pass the greater part of a day in taking stock, as commercial men would say—in seeing what I do know and can accurately repeat. I dare say they are by no means the most beautiful extracts from the respective authors. Indeed, I am almost sure they are not; but they are those that have pleased my fancy, or captivated my affections; and, as I have not seen reason to dismiss any of them from my mind, I suppose they were sincerely adopted—I mean they were such as specially pleased me, and not such as I was told to admire.

Blanche. How delightful it would be, if we were to pass a morning in questioning you, and seeing what you had learnt by heart in remarkable authors!

Ellesmere. We should certainly find out all his weaknesses; we know a good many of them already. However, if Milverton would consent to be a talking book of elegant extracts for the nonce, it would not be a very disagreeable way of spending time, and it would get rid of the taste (I thank you, Miss Blanche, for that choice and gracious metaphor) of my essay, which, I can see, is odious to all of you, and the more so, because you must feel that you are persons for whom it is especially requisite to study my injunctions. If you had attended to them earlier in life, Dunsford would now be Mr. Dean; Milverton would be the Right Honourable Leonard Milverton, and the leader of a party; Mr. Midhurst would be chief cook to the Emperor Napoleon; the bull-dog would have been promoted to the parlour; I, but no man is wise for himself, should have been Lord Chancellor; Walter would be at the head of his class without having any more

knowledge than he has at present ; and, as for you two girls, one would be a Maid of Honour to the Queen, and the other would have married the richest man in the county.

Dunsford. Should we have been any happier ?

Ellesmere. There you are off again into space. Did I pretend, my good man, to write a sermon ? Did I say that my hero would be a hero at all, that is, in your sense of the word ? I merely meant him to be a person to get on in the world. But really, without intending any especial offence to the present company, there is not more than one man out of two thousand five hundred and thirty-seven who keeps to the point ; and all of you belong to the two thousand five hundred and thirty-six who do not. However, we will quit the subject. It will be far more pleasant now to exercise that quoting-machine, Milverton. Let the boy have his turn first. Now, Walter, you are probably aware that your father has read every stupid book in the world, and knows the stupidest bits in each of them by heart.

Walter. No : they are not the stupidest ; they are the best.

Ellesmere. Well, Walter, if they are, you need not hit me so hard in the abdominal regions to prove it. But you are quite as logical and rational as the rest of the company. How the little imp sticks up for his father, right or wrong ! What will you have, Walter ?

Walter. I should like a bit of *Robinson Crusoe*.

Milverton. " It was on a Friday, the twenty-fourth of June, that, having now completed my hut, and laid up a store of yams and birds' eggs, I walked down upon the

sea-shore. It was very hot, and the shade from the palm-trees was very scant. I little thought, when I was an apprentice boy at Bristol, where I first saw a dried palm-leaf, that these trees would be my chief companions, indeed, I may say, my only friends. The large turtles crawled away from me, and I was too idle to follow them, though I thought how many a Bristol merchant, even the mayor, Sir John Wishart, had never given so ample and succulent a repast to his friends as he would have done if any of these noble reptiles had been brought over in one of his ships. At this moment I turned to retrace my steps, when I discerned a track in the sand. My heart began to beat violently. It could not be my own footsteps, for"—

Walter. I do not remember any of this in the book, Papa.

Milverton. Nor I, my dear. I was only inventing. I will not attempt to deceive you any more ; for the truth, I am ashamed to say, is, that I do not remember any of my *Robinson Crusoe* accurately.

Ellesmere. Hurrah ! A break-down at the first start ! Now, Dunsford, you are the next youngest ; at least the next in innocence ;—may we say, in viridity ?

Dunsford. Well, I like the poetry that was poetry in my time. I should like a bit of Pope—a long bit.

Milverton.

“The darksome pines that o’er yon rocks reclined
Wave high, and murmur to the hollow wind,
The wand’ring streams that shine between the hills,
The grotts that echo to the tinkling rills,
The dying gales that pant upon the trees,
The lakes that quiver to the curling breeze :

No more these scenes my meditations aid,
 Or lull to rest the visionary maid :
 But o'er the twilight groves and dusky caves,
 Long-sounding aisles and intermingled graves,
 Black melancholy sits, and round her throws
 A death-like silence, and a dread repose ;
 Her gloomy presence saddens all the scene,
 Shades ev'ry flower and darkens every green,
 Deepens the murmur of the falling floods,
 And breathes a browner horror on the woods."

Dunsford. Beautiful ! beautiful !

" And breathes a browner horror on the woods."

Where will you beat that, Sir ?

Ellesmere. I am the next youngest. Give us a bit of Churchill. That will rather puzzle you, I think.

Milverton. I think not.

" 'Tis not the babbling of an idle world,
 Where praise and censure are at random hurled,
 That can the meanest of my thoughts control,
 Or shake one settled purpose of my soul.
 Free and at large might their wild curses roam
 If all, if all, alas, were well at home."

Ellesmere. Upon my word, they are very good. Now let us have a bit of Dr. Johnson—not his poetry, though. I protest against *Irene*.

Milverton. "The prince desired a little kingdom in which he might administer justice in his own person, and see all the parts of government with his own eyes ; but he could never fix the limits of his dominions, and was always adding to the number of his subjects.

“ Imlac and the astronomer were contented to be driven along the stream of life without directing their course to any particular port.

“ Of these wishes that they had formed they well knew that none could be obtained. They deliberated awhile what was to be done, and resolved, when the inundation should cease, to return to Abyssinia.”

Ellesmere. You being juvenile, Walter, have an unlimited supply of audacity. Ask your father to give us something of his own—a favourite bit of his writing.

Milverton. With pleasure: I would not let modesty hinder for a moment my endeavours to oblige this company, especially Ellesmere. Let me think for a minute or two, and I shall be able, perhaps, to remember something.

“ It might be a dream, it might be more than a dream, but, methought, that I wandered like another Dante conducted by another Virgil, and came upon regions not depicted in the awful poem of the great Florentine. My mind, abjuring gloomier scenes, dwells upon one in which Comedy was strangely mingled with Tragedy. The place itself was not lugubrious. There were pleasant plains, grassy hillocks, tinkling rivulets, trees like our trees, and other trees totally unlike the trees of earth, but showing innumerable fantasies unknown to us, of leaf, of bud, of blossom. One peculiarity marked the scene, and rendered it different from all that I had hitherto beheld. Everywhere the land was divided by innumerable boundaries, sometimes of lava stones, sometimes of trellised vines, sometimes of the forked aloë; and smaller portions were divided

again by glittering ropes. The whole landscape, which otherwise would have been gracious and beautiful, was deformed by landmarks.

“A people of acute countenance, ready speech, and trouble ever in their anxious eyes, occupied these regions. I could not but note that their gaze was never at the landscape, but always fixed upon these boundaries. Their demeanour to each other was most strange. They did not dwell apart, but seemed most eager for companionship. They were for ever accosting each other ; but, after a few minutes’ conference, they separated from each other with looks of disgust and aversion. These movements were repeated so often as to present the appearance of a regulated dance. After watching them till I began to grow dizzy, I turned with looks of bewilderment to my conductor.

“He smiled for the first time ; and, sighing, said, ‘All these, my friend, were lawyers upon earth, and this is the Purgatory of Lawyers. Each spirit longs to promote a suit, and believes that he has one entrusted to him. Each spirit believes that he is liable to a suit, and dreads with a horror unknown, except to Lawyers, the expenses and the worry of the suit. They confer together, as you see ; each thinks that he has found a client, and begins to talk with earnestness and volubility of the other’s cause that is soon coming on. After a few moments each finds that he is not meeting with a client, but with another lawyer wishing to undertake his affairs, and in a state of happy volubility about the other’s law-suit. They separate, as you behold, with undisguised disgust upon their countenances. For ages they will commingle together in

this dread dance of law; but never will any one meet with the one he wishes to detain, for no client will ever enter these eternal regions of discord about nothing. Endlessly fleeing from law on their own behalf, endlessly seeking for law on behalf of others, they pass their time in eager pursuit and utter discomfiture.' ”

You do not wish for any more, do you, Ellesmere?

Ellesmere. I have had quite enough! This kind of vulgar prejudice against the defenders of property has been common in all ages—and is as ungrateful as it is common.

Milverton. I must confess it is a great shame in me to say anything against lawyers, for my best friends are lawyers, but one cannot help having some fun sometimes about their ways of going on; and certainly it is amusing to observe the horror that lawyers themselves have of law. A humorous friend of mine, who is always getting up imaginary companies, says that nothing would pay like a company for instituting frivolous suits against great lawyers. He has made out his calculations, and asserts that fifty thousand a year is to be derived in this way from the Chancery bar alone.

Ellesmere. I am persuaded that Milverton keeps these little bits of pleasant fiction ready in his mind to fire off upon me. He never wrote that dream of his, and he could not have been so glib with it, if it were entirely new to him.

I know this, that if clients complain of their lawyers, lawyers may sometimes complain of their clients. I have received a letter this morning, from which I can dimly

make out that there is something which I ought to do, or ought not to do, but which of the two I cannot tell, for the whole letter is a hopeless puzzle of intemperate scratches, ending with a wild flourish by way of signature.

Mr. Midhurst. There are two things which Milverton ought to have dwelt upon in his essay on "Worry," and which, knowing his aversion to both of them, I expected to hear something about—unpunctuality and bad writing.

Milverton. It is certainly astonishing to see how very few people write legibly. I can't think how it is that bad writers make up their minds to lose so much force as they do by bad writing. If you address anything to a correspondent, you want him to understand it at once. You want it to come with its full force upon his mind. Accordingly, if you write a word badly, you had better erase it, and write the word over again carefully. You do not wish your friend to puzzle over what you are imparting to him. Bad writers cannot now plead great examples for bad writing. It is a curious thing, but going back for a long period, you may notice that, with few exceptions, prime ministers have been remarkably good writers. Canning, I am told, wrote an exquisite hand; the Duke of Wellington a clear and noble one; Sir Robert Peel a most legible hand, a thought perhaps too mercantile for beauty, but still an excellent hand. Lord Palmerston's handwriting is a model of good penmanship: Lord John Russell's forcible and distinct; and I might continue to give a long list of eminent men who have not disdained to take much pains with their handwriting. I mention these statesmen because all of them had, or have, to write a great quantity

in the course of most days, and might fairly be excused if they wrote badly.

I am sorry to condemn bad writing, for it hits some of my best friends very hard—men who seem to do everything well but their writing ; and though in general I am not inclined to give up my friend Plato, whom I do know, for that abstraction called Truth,* whom I seldom have the pleasure of meeting in society ; yet I must confess that bad handwriting is a blemish.

Mr. Midhurst. The strangest thing in the way of bad writing, which, however, is very frequent, is when a man indites the body of his letter with sufficient clerkly skill, but makes the signature what Ellesmere would call “a hopeless puzzle of intemperate scratches.” The man is perhaps unknown to you, and you really do not know how to address him in reply.

Milverton. Yes, that is very absurd. But, the truth is, that, notwithstanding all the pains we are taking with education, there are three common things which are hardly ever sufficiently attended to—reading, writing, and weighing and measuring.

How few people know how to read ! The bar, the senate, and the church show that. When any document is read in court, how badly for the most part it is given out. In private life, too, how little good reading there is.

I owe a great deal to my mother for having taught me to read. Week after week, month after month, she would

* Milverton, of course, alluded to the old saying, “Amicus Socrates, amicus Plato, sed magis amica Veritas.”

exercise me for an hour or two every day in reading, bestowing the utmost care on the pronunciation of each word. The good lady probably thought, this boy will have tutors and schoolmasters who will teach him languages and mathematics and all manner of fine things, but none of them will teach him how to read. I will do that for him. And she had a great deal to do, for by nature I had much difficulty in pronouncing clearly. I am very grateful to her for the pains she took, and believe that most mothers could hardly devote themselves to a more important thing in the education of their children than teaching them to read. How much better than if she had taught me a little bad French with a strong English pronunciation, which I should have had to unlearn.

Dunsford. It is very true. I am well aware how much as a clergyman I lose from reading badly, as I know I do. I was never taught to read ; and no doubt it is a great art.

Mr. Midhurst. But what do you mean by what you said about weighing and measuring ?

Milverton. I mean what I said. Amongst all classes, and especially in the lower, there is next to no skill in weighing and measuring. If I were an Inspector of schools, I would carry with me weights and scales and measures of all kinds. I would then read out some receipt for the girls and some problem for the boys ; produce my weights and measures with the materials to be weighed and measured ; and would have the weighing and measuring done before my eyes, to my satisfaction. Did you ever know a she-cook who was sufficiently

inclined to weigh and measure? Certainly not. They dislike doing a thing which they have never been practised to do.

Mr. Midhurst. Ah, this indeed is sensible—A Daniel come to an Inspectorship!

Milverton. Then, if in education we could add some knowledge of music—I mean of the scientific part of music, the principles of harmony, what accomplished creatures we should turn out. Think of a human being who can read his own language well, write legibly, do accounts well (that in all national schools they are wonderfully versed in at present), weigh and measure accurately, and appreciate, if not produce, harmony in music. Such a person would be sure to be useful, and would be good company anywhere. He would probably be able to speak out, an accomplishment at present of the rarest kind.

Ellesmere. Do not go any more into education. It is an interminable subject, and we have really talked enough for one day. We shall dislike one another if we talk much more. Besides, I mean to go on with my own education, and to get up three irregular verbs in German in the course of the day. I advise you all to do the same. There is no change of thought so pleasant for a man jaded with business as getting up even a little of a foreign language, if it be but enough to spell out a paragraph in a foreign newspaper. I always turn to the English news, and find it quite interesting to discover, by the aid of a pocket dictionary, from the *Cologne Gazette*, that the weather is rainy in England, that Prince Albert went out deer-stalking the other day, and that Sir Wood, by which

I suppose they mean Sir Charles Wood, has given a sensible lecture to his constituents at Halifax. I can assure you I did not come to the knowledge of these facts yesterday without a good deal of hard work, and I value them accordingly.

Here we all rose, and the conversation was concluded.

END OF VOL I.



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